LETTER

TO

HENRY GRATTAN, Esq. M.P.

&c. &c. &c.

BY

WILLIAM SMITH, Esq.

——— "Revinxit;
"Immotamque coli dedit."———
Virgil.

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to

James Middleton Berry Esq.

from the Author

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LETTER

TO

HENRY GRATTAN, Esq.

&c. &c.

SIR,

IT ſeems to me that the intelligent part of the Iriſh nation have a right, before they decide upon a matter in which their moſt valuable intereſts are involved, to expect that it ſhould receive the ampleſt, and moſt complete diſcuſſion. No argument ſhould remain untouched, no objection be left unanſwered, which can throw light upon a queſtion of ſuch ſingular importance, as that which now engages, and indeed agitates the publick mind. Under the impreſſion of this ſentiment, I ſit down for the purpoſe of addreſſing through you to my countrymen, ſuch obſervations on the queſtion of Union, as have been ſuggeſted to me by the peruſal of a Speech lately publiſhed as yours, in the Dublin and Anti-Union Evening Poſts.*

* Of Saturday Jan. 18th, 1800. I do not undertake to animadvert on any thing which fell from Mr. Grattan in Parliament, but only on thoſe poſitions which have been publiſhed in the newſpapers under the ſanction of his name.

For many of thoſe who are on the Anti-Union ſide, I feel the moſt ſincere reſpect; and look on them to be ſuch ſtaunch friends to Britiſh connexion, that I am perſuaded there muſt be moments when they doubt the expediency of an oppoſition, in which the worſt enemies of Ireland concur: moments, when they almoſt recognize the ſalutary tendencies of a meaſure, againſt which ſeparatiſts have raiſed their voices, to a man.

I do not cenſure, I applaud, the generous ſacrifice which they make, in not withdrawing that ſupport which they think due to a juſt cauſe, though contaminated by the ſuſpicious advocatiſm of treaſon. But I warn them, they are miſtaken: the cauſe to which they are inadvertently lending their aſſiſtance, is the ſame which they have ſo lately defeated in the field. If they doubt me, let them look to the allies whom they have gained: let them aſk themſelves if the zeal which their new confederates evince, could be excited by any proſpect ſhort of ſeparation?

Theſe reflections have inſenſibly led me away; though not into topicks which can be deemed foreign, or irrelevant: I ſhall now enter, without further preface, upon the taſk which I have undertaken, and proceed with my examination of your printed ſpeech, together with ſuch matters as appertain to it, and to my ſubject. But before I engage in that free diſcuſſion which is before me, it may be right that I ſhould diſclaim all intention of giving you perſonal offence. I have nothing to do with your motives or deſigns; and your friends have my permiſſion to balance,

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if they can, whatever miſchief you may have done, with the good which you intended: I ſhall merely indulge in thoſe animadverſions on the tendencies of your political conduct, to which every publick man is accuſtomed to ſubmit.

You open your attack on the meaſure which I ſupport, with a multitude of aſſertions, which, as they are utterly unſupported, I perſuade myſelf that it will not be difficult to put to rout.

"The Britiſh Miniſter" you inform us, "declares his intolerance of that parliamentary "conſtitution of Ireland, which he ordered the "ſeveral Viceroys to celebrate: now pronouncing that eſtabliſhment to be a miſerable imperfection, in defence of which he recommended "the French war, and to which he ſwore the "yeomanry."

Sir, this is not ſo: Mr. Pitt is ſo far from declaring his intolerance of that conſtitution, which he has concurred in commending, that he ſeeks, by the proffered union, to protect it againſt the intolerance of thoſe, who might prefer an eſtabliſhment on the French model: nay he more than endures the independence, which makes a part of that conſtitution: he has expreſsly recognized it, and acted on this recognition: he has repeatedly and explicitly acknowledged the incompetence of the Britiſh Legiſlature to bind this country to an union, and the competence of our Parliament to reject the propoſal: inſomuch that though we ſhould take ſo narrow a view of the ſubject, as to look to no part of the conſtitution of Ireland, but

that

that which regulates its relations with Great Britain, we ſhould yet be juſtified in aſſerting the conſiſtency of Mr. Pitt; and inſiſting that the conduct of the Engliſh Government, with reſpect to union, has not only amounted to a tolerance, but to a ſtrong aſſertion of the independence which we acquired in 1782.

But the Britiſh Miniſter has at no time applauded the diſtinctneſs, which he now recommends us to aboliſh. His eulogy applied to principles which union will leave unimpaired: to theories which union will reduce to practice. He extolled the excellencies of the ſettlement of 1782; and left it to more depraved ſtateſmen to celebrate its defects: he admired in it the bloſſom which ſhould ripen into union; while others praiſed the canker which threaten'd ſeparation. So far from commending the brittleneſs of our connexion, I firmly believe that the Britiſh Miniſter had it in contemplation, at that period, to attempt the rendering this connexion leſs precarious. Meantime he did not call on us to rejoice that we were diſtinct; but, being diſtinct, to be thankful that we were independent.

If our Viceroys celebrated the Conſtitution of 1782, it was not for any qualities which union will deſtroy. They contraſted it with that degrading ſyſtem which had gone before; not with the preferable arrangement which is to come: and perhaps in no point of view would it have been more deſerving of celebration, than if it were

were conſidered as preliminary to the meaſure which is now propoſed for our acceptance.

That eſtabliſhment which was the real object of the Miniſter's panegyric, he is ſo far from now pronouncing to be a miſerable imperfection, that on the contrary the events which have lately paſſed in Europe have but ſerved to encreaſe its title to his admiration. He has ſeen the leſſons of ages compreſſed into the narrow period of a few years, and mankind enabled to learn that from their own experience, which it had heretofore been the province of hiſtory to teach. The foil of anarchy has made the luſtre of our eſtabliſhment more apparent; and, as in 1793 the French war was undertaken in its defence, in 1800 the Union is recommended for its protection.

Fear not, my good Sir, that the oath of the yeomanry ſhould ſtand between that loyal body and the good of their country. Thoſe who have not taken the obligation, may be excuſed if they are ignorant of its tenor and effect. Thoſe who have, do not require to be informed that the King, Lords, and Commons form the Legiſlature of this country: that the acts of this aſſembly are the law of the land; and that by the principles of that Conſtitution, which as yeomen and ſubjects they are ſworn to maintain, the ſovereign Parliament, (however diſſimilar the two ſtatutes may be) is as competent to enact an union, as a road-bill.

Following in your ſteps, and pretending to no better arrangement than that which the ſpeech

that

that I am anſwering has preſcribed, I now attend you to a ſubject on which you are entitled to be heard: I mean the final adjuſtment of 1782.

You make two charges againſt the Britiſh Miniſter: firſt you charge him with diſclaiming the ſettlement of 1782;—and ſecondly, with maintaining that this adjuſtment was no more than an incipient train of negotiation.

The firſt branch of your accuſation I hold to be unfounded; and as to the aſſertion which, in the ſecond place, you have aſcribed to the Miniſter, I am diſpoſed to think it is one, in which the facts will bear him out.

If I can accompliſh the refutation of your firſt charge, without controverting the ſtatement which you have yourſelf made, it will be a point gained: for by agreeing on facts and premiſſes, we ſhall narrow the diſcuſſion, and prevent a waſte of time. This is therefore what I ſhall attempt to do.

But I ſhall in the firſt inſtance examine, and endeavour to get rid of, what I conceive to be the leaſt relevant and concluſive part of your argument, viz. that which conſiſts in a denial of Mr. Pitt's aſſertion, that the ſettlement of 1782 was a mere (though moſt important) ſtep in negotiation: a mere article in the intended treaty of perpetual amity and connexion; and that "it was in the "contemplation of the Britiſh Government of "that day to adopt ſome *further* meaſures, proper

"to

" to ſtrengthen the connexion between the two " countries."*

Towards diſproving the truth of your denial, and demonſtrating that Mr. Pitt was warranted in his poſition, I will aſk of any candid and intelligent man—whether the following ſhort ſtatement would not ſuffice?

The only grievance complained of by Ireland, which it was the province of England to redreſs, (all the reſt being matter for our own internal regulation,) was that which conſiſted in the claim of the Britiſh Parliament to make laws for this country. This claim was given up, in the way in which Ireland herſelf preſcribed, by the repeal of the ſixth of George the Firſt;† and *after* it had been ſo ſurrendered,—after the ſingle link of our dependence had been thus cut,—" an ad- " dreſs to his Majeſty was moved and carried, " praying him to take ſuch further meaſures as to " him ſeemed proper, to ſtrengthen the connex- " ion between the two countries:" to which addreſs " his Majeſty's moſt gracious anſwer, " ſtating that he *would take ſuch meaſures as might* " *be neceſſary for that purpoſe*, was delivered to " the Houſe by a gentleman, who then filled" (an high office of truſt in adminiſtration, viz.) " the " office of Secretary of State."‡

If

* See Mr. Pitt's ſpeech on Thurſday January 31, 1799.

† And was afterwards to the ſatisfaction of the moſt ſqueamiſh, ſurrendered by the act of renunciation.

‡ Mr. Pitt's ſpeech.

If the above enumeration of indiſputable facts, (facts "public, regiſtered and recorded," * as any on which you can rely,) does not ſuſtain the Britiſh Miniſter's aſſertion, that after the grievances which Ireland complained of had been redreſſed, after her diſputes with the ſiſter country had been adjuſted, it ſtill "was in "the contemplation of the Britiſh Government "of that day, to adopt ſome further meaſures "proper to ſtrengthen the connexion,"—I for my part cannot conceive what is demonſtration.

The ſophiſtry is vain and paltry, which inſinuates that a ſettlement may not be completely final to one intent, at the ſame time that it is ſtrictly initiative to another: it is an abuſe of reaſon, as well as of language, to infer that what concludes paſt controverſy, muſt thereby preclude all future negotiation. The valetudinarian, who by medicine has brought one malady to a concluſion, is not precluded from changing his regimen to improve his conſtitution; and prevent his being attacked by another dangerous diſeaſe: the recovery which a man ſuffers in our courts of law, or the fine which derives its very name from its finality, is final and concluſive to bar a former entail, while it is preliminary to the further ſettlement, in contemplation of which it has been made, and which is to provide for the future comfort of the ſettlor, and his deſcendants.

I dwell the more upon this topick, becauſe I would prevent the poſſibility of its being attributed to thoſe whoſe opinions I eſpouſe, that they doubt

* Mr. Grattan's words.

doubt the ſettlement of 1782 to have been final. It would be equally falſe, and miſchievous, to deny that ſettlement to have been a final and irrevocable adjuſtment of all preceding diſputes between the countries; but it is no leſs ſophiſtical and pernicious, to pervert this finality into an obſtacle to further meaſures, which the legiſlature may deem neceſſary for ſecuring the permanence of the connexion: meaſures which, ſo long as they do not impugn the principle which Ireland then aſſerted, are compatible with the ſettlement that took place in 1782; and in no degree impede, or reſtrain its operation: meaſures which that ſettlement was, in my opinion, rather calculated to ſmooth the way for, than obſtruct.

I ſhall not deſert the ſtrong ground of fact which I have taken, by ſhewing the probability which there was, that the Britiſh government ſhould have in contemplation that, which the miniſter ſays they had. If I did, I might enquire of any rational man whether, conſidering the ſituation of the two countries, it was not likely that the Engliſh miniſtry, having finally adjuſted the queſtion of Iriſh grievance, ſhould proceed to the important queſtion of Britiſh connexion, and adopt meaſures that were calculated to ſtrenghten and ſecure it? whether they were not the more likely to do ſo, if the control, which had been juſt renounced, (however offenſive it might be to this country,) yet tended, with all its faults, to conſolidate the empire, and therefore when relinquiſhed, required to be ſucceeded by the ſubſtitution of a ſyſtem, more compatible with Iriſh honour, and equally conducive to

the intereſts of Britain?—But this would be to wander into ſuperfluous inveſtigation, by ſhewing that to be probable, which I had already demonſtrated to be fact.

But with reſpect to this, as with reſpect to the other branch of your accuſation, let me ſee how the caſe ſtands, even on your own ſtatement.

"The firſt tracts," you ſay, "of the adjuſtment of 1782 were two meſſages, ſent by "his Majeſty to the Parliaments of the different "countries:" in other words, the ſettlement of 1782 originated, by your own admiſſion, with the adviſers of the crown; that is to ſay, with the Britiſh adminiſtration. Now one would ſuppoſe that, towards aſcertaining the meaſures of which any plan was intended to conſiſt, we ſhould examine the conduct of the perſons who contrived it; and if we do ſo in the preſent caſe, the addreſs and anſwer which have been already noticed, and which were both poſterior to the repeal of the ſixth of Geo. I. will evince the truth of the Miniſter's aſſertion, that further meaſures were in the contemplation of the Government of that day.

But again, ſuppoſing (according to the truth) that the Britiſh Houſes of Parliament were parties to this tranſaction, then what appears from your own ſtatement? that having determined to ſurrender their claim to legiſlate for this country, the Britiſh Parliament, in the ſecond place, reſolved "that the connexion between the countries "ſhould by mutual conſent, be placed on a "ſolid and permanent foundation." *

Let

* Mr. Grattan's words.

Let any candid man attend to the import of this reſolution, and ſay whether he can contradict the ſtatement of Mr. Pitt, that it was in the contemplation of government in 1782, towards ſtrengthening the connexion between the countries, to adopt meaſures of the nature of that which is now propoſed.

But you tell us that the addreſs of the Iriſh Parliament, upon the conſideration of theſe two reſolutions, *expreſsly* rejects the ſecond.

To ſupport the ſtatement which you have ſo boldly made, you ſhould be able to read from this addreſs, what I confeſs would be a very extraordinary paragraph, viz. that it was the humble opinion of his Majeſty's moſt dutiful and loyal ſubjects, the Iriſh Lords and Commons in Parliament aſſembled, "that the connexion be-"tween the countries ſhould *not* be placed, by "mutual conſent, on a permanent foundation." Such a paragraph, I admit, would have ſupported your poſition, that the addreſs *expreſsly* rejected the ſecond Britiſh reſolution.

But you are ſo far from ſhewing an *expreſs* rejection, that you are utterly unable to produce an implied one. The Iriſh Parliament, you ſay, expreſsly negatived the ſecond reſolution; *for* they ſaid that "they conceived the Reſolution "for unqualified, unconditional Repeal of the "ſixth of Geo. I. to be a meaſure of con-"ſummate wiſdom."* The connexion between your premiſe and your inference, I confeſs, I am dull enough not to diſcern plainly.

"May

* Mr. Grattan's words.

" May it pleaſe your Majeſty, we your, &c. " in Parliament aſſembled, conceive the repeal " of the ſixth of George the Firſt to be an ex- " tremely wiſe meaſure; and THEREFORE it is ſo " plain, (and follows ſo inevitably from the pre- " miſſes,) that the connexion between the coun- " tries ſhould *not* be placed, by mutual conſent, " on a permanent foundation, that we ſhall not " trouble your Majeſty, by ſtating ſo obvious a " concluſion, or by more explicitly rejecting the " ſecond Reſolution, which has been propoſed for " our conſideration." Such logick might be parliamentary; but I doubt its being Ariſtotelian.

But I am digreſſing from my ſubject: for though you ſhould have ſucceeded, as completely as you have failed, in ſupporting your poſition, that the Iriſh Parliament had rejected the ſecond Reſolution of the Britiſh Houſes, yet this would not diſprove Mr. Pitt's aſſertion, that further meaſures were in the contemplation of the Government of that day; nor would it diminiſh the weight of that evidence, which the Engliſh addreſs and anſwer, and the ſecond Reſolution, abundantly ſupply in ſupport of his aſſertion. It would at moſt prove only this, that the temper of Ireland, and the ſilence with which their Parliament paſſed this reſolution over, made it neceſſary that Government, content to appeaſe the jealouſies of the Iriſh nation, and conciliate their affections by liberal conceſſion, ſhould arreſt the grand

imperial

imperial ſettlement in its career, and poſtpone its conſummation to a more favourable moment.

And what a generous foundation did England lay! By the *firſt* reſolution, ſhe regiſtered her conſent that Ireland ſhould be independent; and ſubmitted the *ſecond* to the new tribunal, which ſhe had thus liberally erected. She firſt made us a high contracting power; and then ſolicited us to treat on equal terms. Conſiſtently with the tenor of that *firſt* Britiſh reſolution, which had renounced all pretenſions to legiſlate for Ireland, the *ſecond* admitted that the connexion between the countries could not be placed on a ſolid foundation, unleſs by *mutual conſent*.

The Iriſh Parliament did not reject the ſecond reſolution; but, under the influence of ſome of the party which then prevailed, tacitly poſtponed entering, as the ſiſter country had recommended, on meaſures that might be calculated to ſtrengthen the connexion. They withheld that conſent, which the liberality of Britain had but juſt then rendered requiſite or efficacious; and preferred inhabiting the ruins of the fabrick which they had demoliſhed, to building a firm imperial eſtabliſhment in its room: whilſt the ſiſter country on her part, reſpecting the independence which ſhe had conferred, acquieſced in the delay of that conſummation which ſhe deſired. The regency, and commercial propoſitions followed: the contagion of french principles ſoon after got amongſt us; and ſeparatiſts have been long demonſtrating the truth of that opinion, pronounced by the Britiſh Legiſlature

giſlature in 1782, (and to which it is your boaſt that our Parliament paid no attention,) " that the " connexion between the countries ought, by " mutual conſent, to be placed on ſome ſolid and " permanent foundation."

A few words more on this part of the ſubject, and I have done.

After mentioning that paſſage in the Iriſh Addreſs, where it is ſaid that " we conceive the " reſolution for the unqualified, unconditional " repeal of the ſixth of Geo. I. to be a meaſure " of conſummate wiſdom," you add that you " drew that addreſs; and introduced thoſe words " expreſsly to exclude any ſubſequent qualifica- " tions, or limitations, affecting to clog or reſtrain " the operation of that repeal, and plenitude of " the legiſlative authority of our Iriſh Parliament."

This paragraph in your ſpeech I conſider as very well deſerving of attention.

The object, you tell us, of this Iriſh addreſs was to negative the ſecond of the Britiſh reſolutions; and with this eſpecial view was that paſſage introduced, in which the wiſdom of repealing the declaratory act is extolled.

What then, (on your ſtatement,) was the qualification which you were deſirous to exclude, and which you were apprehenſive might clog the operation of the repeal? *The placing the connexion between the countries, by mutual conſent, on a ſolid and permanent foundation.*

This was the limitation which you were ſo anxious to exclude: this was the clog on Iriſh independence,

independence, which you feared: this was the abridgment of Iriſh legiſlative authority, which you were ſo ſtudious to avoid.

To place the connexion between the countries on a firm and permanent foundation—is, by your account, to reſtrain the efficacy of the repeal of the ſixth of Geo. I. and abridge the legiſlative authority of Ireland.

Sir, you may have advanced theſe doctrines raſhly, or I may have miſtaken the tendency of your poſitions: but if this be not the caſe,—if you have deliberately made the aſſertions which I attribute to you, and have acted the part which you deſcribe, then to me you appear to have ſpoken the language, and (inadvertently I preſume) further'd the cauſe of ſeparation.

Thoſe who regarded the Independence which we acquired in 1782, not as their end, but as their means,—who valued it not as a grant of freedom, but prepared to wield it as an inſtrument of ſeparation,—will naturally oppoſe all meaſures which tend to ſtrengthen the connexion; and muſt abhor Union, as utterly deſtructive of their hopes: to them, the act of annexation will ſeem a clog on the plenitude of Iriſh legiſlative authority; and while they declaim on the finality of the adjuſtment to which we have been alluding, they will in fact agree with the miniſter, in conſidering it as preliminary and defective: the only difference between them will be this,—that while he may value it as a ſtep towards

Union,

Union,—they will eſteem it as a ſtride towards ſeparation.

I call not upon ſuch men: I addreſs not thoſe, who repreſent the preſent connexion of the countries as a ſtate of ſmothered hoſtility, and mutual intimidation: who derive the ſecurity of Ireland from her power of annoying Britain; and vaunt our cordiality, in forbearing to ſtrike the blow, which however they would have continually to impend. I ſpeak not to thoſe, who mingle ſuch bitter and repulſive doctrines, with their wheedling rants about ſtanding or falling with Great Britain. I addreſs myſelf to a very different deſcription of perſons: I call upon the well affected men of Ireland, the loyal opponents of the meaſure now propoſed, to attend to the language of their new allies, and reſiſt, if they can, *their* arguments for Union.

I now proceed to diſprove the charge which you have brought againſt Mr. Pitt, of "denying a "recorded act, and diſclaiming the final ad-"juſtment of 1782;"—and in order to preclude controverſy as to facts, and to ſhorten diſcuſſion, I ſhall keep my promiſe of taking, as my premiſes, the ſtatement which you have made.

Where are we to look for that diſclaimer, which you have ſo directly aſcribed to the Britiſh Miniſter? In the language which he has uſed, or in the conduct which he has purſued? If I examine his expreſſions, I am ſo far from diſcovering there, any denial of Iriſh Independence, that on the contrary I find it explicitly acknowledged, and even

ſtrongly

ſtrongly aſſerted. I find the Miniſter declaring himſelf "to feel and know that the Parliament of Ire-"land poſſeſs the power, *the entire competence*, to "accept of, or *reject*" the propoſed Union: "that "it is the undoubted right of the Iriſh legiſlature "to reject, or to adopt ſuch meaſures, as may "appear to them injurious, or beneficial."* By admitting the competence of the Iriſh Parliament to decline the offer which is made them, and the incompetence of a Britiſh Legiſlature to impoſe the meaſure on this country, does Mr. Pitt diſclaim the final adjuſtment of 1782?—What more did we acquire by that ſettlement than independence? or how can independence be more unequivocally recogniſed? what more did we ſhake off, or did Britain ſurrender, than the competence of her Parliament to control, or bind this country? and how could language more perſpicuouſly record this emancipation upon our part, or this ſurrender upon hers, than has been done by the expreſſions of Mr. Pitt? The caſe is ſo clear, that the plaineſt queſtions form my premiſſes, and the anſwers of every rational man will furniſh my concluſions.

If it be not in his language that we can detect this denial of the ſettlement of 1782, which you have thought proper to charge on the Britiſh Miniſter, let us next enquire whether any of his proceedings amount to an infraction of that ſolemn compact.

* Mr. Pitt's ſpeech.

" That ſettlement," you ſay, " eſtabliſhed two " grand poſitions: firſt the admiſſion of the Iriſh " claim, to be legiſlated for by no other Parlia- " ment, but that of Ireland: ſecondly, the final- " ity impoſed upon the two nations, regarding " all conſtitutional projects affecting each other."

In undertaking to admit the *facts* on which your charge is grounded, as thoſe facts are ſtated by yourſelf, I of courſe did not bind myſelf to acquieſce in all your inferences, and conſtructions. It therefore becomes neceſſary that I ſhould mention, to what extent I agree with your account of the arrangement of 1782.

I conſider it to have eſtabliſhed only one poſition, viz. that all attempts of the Britiſh Parliament to legiſlate for this country ſhould finally ceaſe; and Ireland be thenceforth bound by no acts but thoſe of her own Legiſlature.

Shew me that Mr. Pitt's conduct has impugned this principle, and I ſhall admit the juſtice of your charge againſt him: Prove to me that Union will contravene it, and I ſhall withdraw my humble ſupport from the meaſure.

Let us take a ſhort view of the tranſaction of 1782: I accept of you, Sir, for my guide, in examining its parts.

It was a final adjuſtment: granted. But of what? Adjuſtment, ſettlement, arrangement are terms of relation, and imply ſomething pre-exiſtent: ſomething which is to be adjuſted, ſettled, or arranged. The tribunal which could decide,

decide, where no queſtion was before them, muſt poſſeſs faculties which lie far beyond my comprehenſion.

What was in controverſy between Great Britain and this country? The competence of a Britiſh Parliament to legiſlate for Ireland: a Parliament which contained no peer ſitting in right of his Iriſh honours, nor any commoner repreſenting the property or population of this country.

This was the matter in diſpute; and the adjuſtment conſiſted of a final ſurrender of the Britiſh claim. Upon this ſubject matter the ſettlement operated effectually; but upon what was not in controverſy it could have no operation at all.

What is your own account of the tranſaction? Meſſages were ſent from his Majeſty to the Parliaments of the different countries, to come to a final adjuſtment, in order to remove the jealouſies and diſcontents of the Iriſh. This country, in anſwer, declared the only cauſe of diſcontent, which it was not able by internal acts to remove, to be the interpoſition of the Britiſh Parliament, (conſtituted as I have deſcribed,) in the legiſlative regulation of Ireland. The queſtion thus propoſed, the deciſion followed: the Britiſh Parliament renounced its claim of interference: the ſtated grounds of Iriſh jealouſy were removed; and the final adjuſtment was thus concluded, and enrolled.

Great Britain, indeed, having ſilenced Iriſh diſcontent,

content, was desirous to promote imperial connexion. She wished to render more comprehensive, and beneficial, the negotiation in which the countries had become engaged. She would fain have made the adjustment *more* conclusive: not indeed, by being more final upon the grievance stated, than it was already; (since in this respect I admit the settlement to have been as conclusive as finality itself;) but by embracing another, and a wider subject, and setting at rest an important question which was likely to arise. Great Britain *first* wished liberally to emancipate this country; and having done so, was desirous that independent Ireland should, on terms to be regulated by *mutual* consent, incorporate her freedom with that of her benefactor, and perpetuate at once the liberties, and integrity of the empire.—But in these views, it is your boast that she was frustrated, by the ungracious silence of an Irish Parliament.

To return then from this glance, at the permanent and comprehensive good which might have been accomplished, to the partial benefit which has been obtained, and to resume my enquiry, whether the present conduct of Britain be an attempt to repeal any concessions which she has made,—let me ask you whether it be now proposed that the British Parliament should legislate for this country? It will not be answered that it is; unless by a feeble sophism, which, before I have done, I may condescend to notice.

Meantime

Meantime let me put a caſe, which my own queſtion has ſuggeſted to me, and which ſeems to furniſh a fair argument *a fortiori*.

I will ſuppoſe that the Britiſh Parliament ſhould propoſe to us, to reſume the yoke we had ſhaken off in 1782. If they did, I ſhould reject the meaſure, with as much indignation as would be compatible with my ſenſe of the ludicrous nature of the propoſal. But in refuſing the degrading offer, I ſhould admit that while the Miniſter, who made it, acknowledged the full competence of the Iriſh Parliament to reject it, he could not be charged with violating the ſettlement of 1782; and I ſhould deſpiſe the underſtanding, which refuſed to concur in this admiſſion. The Miniſter, it is true, would offer for our acceptance the very ſame diſgraceful ſyſtem, which we had ſo recently and ſo radically reformed; and in doing ſo, would groſsly inſult our ſpirit and our ſenſe: but ſtill he would not meddle with our freedom: he would not infringe the adjuſtment of 1782. In a word, he would truſt for the acceptance of his propoſal, not to our dependance, but to our infatuation.

But does he make any ſuch contemptuous propoſal? no: Or will any one of thoſe principles, or reaſons, which demonſtrated that control to be a grievance, which was exerciſed by a Parliament in which no Iriſh Members ſat, apply to ſhew that it is incompatible with our freedom, to be governed by an imperial legiſlature, in which we are adequately repreſented? He is a weak

man,

man, or an unfair man, who will not connect the principle aſſerted in 1782, (viz. that we ſhould not be governed by any Parliament but our own,) with the abuſe to which the aſſertion of that principle referred: who will not ſee that it was intended merely to proteſt againſt Ireland's being bound, where ſhe was not repreſented.

But give to this aſſertion the wideſt poſſible extent of meaning. Uncandidly and deluſively puff out the principle, beyond the meaning and intention of thoſe by whom it was promulged, and ſtill I do not fear to meet you upon grounds, to which I might very reaſonably object.

The Treaty of Union is the mutual work of the two countries: but the act of Union alone binding upon us, will be a ſtatute paſſed by the independent Iriſh Parliament, conſiſting merely of the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland: compoſed merely of thoſe, who, under the principle on which you rely, are excluſively competent to legiſlate for this country: and thus our remoteſt deſcendants will be governed in ſtrict conformity to that very maxim, which you would ſet up as an obſtacle to Union; inaſmuch as the force and efficacy, with reſpect to Ireland, of all future acts of the imperial legiſlature, will be derived from the ſtatute of incorporation, paſſed excluſively by the King, Lords, and Commons of this country. So far as they affect us, the ſtatutes of the imperial legiſlature will be as completely deducible from an act of our own Parliament, as the title of his Majeſty

ariſes

ariſes from the acts of ſettlement and recognition;* or as, with reſpect to part of the Britiſh realm, it may be traced to an article of the Scottiſh Union.

Thus, (to ſum up what I have ſaid,) when you pronounce that the firſt article of the compact of 1782 excludes Union, becauſe it covenants that the Iriſh people ſhall be governed by no legiſlature but that of the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, your poſition admits of two ſatisfactory anſwers.

Firſt, that the ſtatute of Union is an act of legiſlation, exerciſed excluſively by that very Parliament, to which the final adjuſtment committed the power of legiſlating for this country, viz. by the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland; and that, as all future ſtatutes, paſſed in the united Parliament, will be enacted by virtue of this fundamental law, their authority will therefore reſt, as far as concerns this country, upon the very principle aſſerted in 1782; ſince the efficacy of thoſe laws to bind the Iriſh people, will flow originally, and *merely*, although remotely, from an act of the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland.

And ſecondly, it may be replied to your objection, that the Imperial Parliament will, with the full conſent of Ireland, be the King, Lords, and Commons of this country. It will be ſo, compatibly with the principle of 1782; becauſe Ireland will be adequately repreſented in that aſſembly: and even though the meaning of the principle had not

* Which latter is a ſort of declaratory law.

not been ſufficiently explained, by that branch in its aſſertion which proteſts againſt the future interference of *Britiſh* Parliaments, yet no man who recollects the hiſtory of that period, and the nature of the abuſe which we then ſought to remove, can doubt that the principle eſtabliſhed was *merely* this, that the Iriſh people ſhould not be bound by laws, which the Iriſh Parliament did not concur in enacting.

I ſhall here cloſe my examination of this topick; with an extract from your ſpeech, and a few animadverſions, for which it ſeems to call.

You tell us that "finality was not only a part "of the ſettlement of 1782, but one of its prin- "cipal objects. *Finality was the principal object* "*of Great Britain;* as legiſlative independency "was the object of our country. Ireland wiſhed "to ſeize the moment of her ſtrength, for the "eſtabliſhment of her liberties: *the court of Eng-* "*land wiſhed to conclude the operations of that* "*ſtrength, and bound its progreſs.* The one "country wiſhed to eſtabliſh her liberty: the "other *to check the growth of demand.* The court "of England therefore came *to an agreement* with "this country, viz. to eſtabliſh for ever a free "and independent exiſtence of the Iriſh Parlia- "ment, and *to preſerve for ever the unity of the* "*Britiſh empire:*" the "connexion" between the "countries to be thenceforward "founded on "the eternal principle of unity of empire, and ſe- "paration of Parliament."

I ſhall

I ſhall not ſtop to enquire whether the ſeparation of their Parliaments be a wiſe, (it certainly is not an obvious,) baſis, on which to found the connexion of two countries; but ſhall proceed at once to thoſe more weighty conſiderations, which are ſuggeſted by the paſſage that I have cited from your ſpeech. This extract I look upon to be pregnant with implications, highly deſerving of attention; and to illuſtrate ſtrongly the profound remark of Lord Minto, that the independence, which we gained in 1782, was a tranſitory, not a permanent ſtate of things; which, if it were not followed by Union, would lead to ſeparation.

Finality you pronounce to have been the grand object of Great Britain. She granted us the independence which we required: but, apprehenſive that our claims might not terminate at this point, ſhe "*wiſhed to check the further growth of demand.*" Let me aſk, what is the plain tendency of this inſinuation? Having acquired independence, what demand remained, the expectation of which might excite terror in Great Britain, unleſs it were the demand of total ſeparation? But, obvious as the inference from your ſtatement may be, you do not impoſe upon us the trouble of collecting it: you put the matter more unequivocally, and directly, by ſaying that after England had granted us independence, ſhe ſtill deemed it neceſſary "to bound the progreſs, and conclude the "operations of our ſtrength." The "*phyſical* "*conſequence*" of Ireland, according to this doctrine, had extorted independence from the ſiſter

country; but in atchieving this, our patriots had by no means gained their end: they had only made ſome progreſs to the point propoſed: they were ſtill in full, and formidable march,—when England, alarmed at the direction which they were taking, and the ſtrong poſition which they had gained, thought it high time to check their career, "*and* "*conclude the operations of their ſtrength.*" "The "court of England therefore came *to an agree-* "*ment* with this country:" they came to a treaty, by which our patriots conſented to ſtop their progreſs, and diſband their forces, on being permitted to garriſon a frontier poſt called *Independence*, which lay directly in their road, and which they looked on as the key to their promiſed land of ſeparation.

Sir, this is not *my* account of the adjuſtment of 1782; and I aſk your pardon if I have miſinterpreted you, in ſuppoſing it yours: the extract on which I have commented is before our readers; who have it in their power, from a more accurate analyſis of its import, or an illuſtrative reference to your public conduct, to do you juſtice, and correct my miſconſtruction.

But, if any man took the view of Iriſh independence, which I may have been very erroneouſly attributing to you, I ſhould uſe his picture, as a ſtrong argument for Union. I ſhould ſay to every loyal friend to Britiſh connexion, here is a perſon, who was party to the tranſaction of 1782, who may be preſumed to know the *end* at which the energetick Iriſh aimed, and the efficacy of the

means

means with which that arrangement had ſupplied them: he tells you, that our independence was but a ſtep, and that "the greater was behind,"—when Britain bid us halt,—and capitulated, by putting us in poſſeſſion of the high roads to ſeparation, on the terms of our undertaking not to uſe them! He ſhews you that independence was, in the eyes of ſome, leſs valuable, as it conferr'd freedom, than as it aggravated diſtinctneſs:—as it wore away the bonds of connexion to a thread, which the firſt ſhock of ſedition might ſnap for ever.

Shall the loyal man leave ſuch an inſtrument in the ſeparatiſts hands? ſhall we hear our enemy boaſt his power,—and yet heſitate to diſarm him? ſhall we hear him detail all the advantages of the ſtrong poſt which he has ſurpriſed,—and deliberate about diſlodging him,—when we can do ſo by a word? when we can do ſo, without ſacrificing an atom of Iriſh freedom;—which Britain does not call on us to leſſen, but to blend? when we can do ſo, not by reſuming our dependence, but merely by incorporating our diſtinctneſs;—and mingling in an empire, of which all the parts will equally depend upon the whole? Far be it from me to diſparage the adjuſtment of 1782: I only deprecate the perverſion of a great political good. I never can look upon that ſettlement as pernicious, until that be demonſtrated, which never can, that it has precluded a meaſure, for which on the contrary I think it has prepared the way. I hold thoſe publick characters to be fortunate, beyond the

the uſual lot of men, who having obtained Iriſh independence in 1782, have lived to perfect their work, by now bringing about an Union.

Unite, or ſeparate: this is the alternative, with which the preſent day preſents us: an alternative, which was diſcerned in 1785, by Mr. Foſter: (but who has loſt ſight of the danger in proportion as it has advanced:) which roſe more formidably upon the view in the year 1789; and which has lately ſhewn our peril with a diſtinctneſs ſo alarming, that our ſafety depends on the promptitude of our choice.

But you do not agree with the Britiſh Miniſter in thinking that the proceedings of 1789 endangered the connexion. I might perhaps have hoped to find you convinced by the arguments of your friends the Speaker, and Mr. Fitzgerald; the former of whom is ſo far from joining in your eulogium, on the pious care which our Parliament took of the connexion at that period, that he conſiders their proceedings to have been of no avail; for that "*notwithſtanding what paſſed*, the "Regent of Great Britain can alone repreſent "the third eſtate of the Iriſh legiſlature;" * and who has, for the purpoſe of removing a difficulty which he declares does not exiſt, given his ſupport to a bill brought in by Mr. Fitzgerald, which alike oppoſes his (Mr. Foſter's) ſentiments, and yours: contradicting *his* opinions, by implying the neceſſity of an enacting ſtatute to eſtabliſh that, which he pronounces to have been law already;

* See page 60 of the Speaker's Speech.

already; and oppoſing *yours*, by recording Mr. Fitzgerald's opinion, that it would be expedient to paſs a bill which might prevent the recurrence of proceedings ſo hazardous to the connexion between the kingdoms, and ſo repugnant to the principles of the Iriſh conſtitution.

But I feel this part of the ſubject to be of too great moment, for me to let it paſs undiſcuſſed; or depute to one Anti-Unioniſt the taſk of replying to the other: not to mention that, independently of the importance of the topick, the mode in which you have treated it deſerves notice, and animadverſion.

It will ſcarcely be denied to be a maxim of our conſtitution, that both theſe countries ſhould have the executive branch of the legiſlative the ſame: indeed this partial Union forms, at preſent, the only point of imperial contact: the ſingle theoretick link, by which the iſlands are held together.

It is true you abridge the extent of this principle, by inſinuation: you give to this conſtitutional axiom the nickname of the "*monarchical principle*;" and talk of the connexion as preſerved "through the *medium* of monarchy." But I diſſent altogether from your limitation;—which is a mere ſophiſtical attempt to withdraw our attention from the end propoſed, to the ordinary means ſtated as applicable for its attainment: I inſiſt upon the maxim, in the full extent in which I have laid it down, and agree with your faithful allies,

allies, the Speaker and Mr. Fitzgerald, that the Britiſh executive, whether King or Regent, can alone repreſent the Iriſh third eſtate.

The mode of applying your ſophiſm is ſufficiently obvious: if you could once make us ſuppoſe monarchy the *only* medium of connexion, it would follow that any ſuſpenſion of the exerciſe of monarchic power would effect a temporary ſeparation of the countries; and abſolve Ireland from the obligation of adhering to thoſe maxims, which imply, as they ſecure, the continuance of connexion.

You might ſay that during the illneſs of our beloved and gracious King, the royal power being indefinitely ſuſpended, the "monarchical principle" was, for a period of uncertain duration, become extinguiſhed: that conſequently the bond of connexion which this monarchical principle conſtituted was, for an indefinite length of time, unlooſed; and that the kingdom of Ireland, though annexed to the royal, was no appendage of the *regential*, executive of England.

In expoſing the pernicious tendency of the reſtriction with which you ſeek to qualify this axiom, and its direct repugnance to the end propoſed, viz. permanency of connexion, I conceive myſelf to have ſufficiently proved your two anti-union colleagues right, and to have ſhewn that your limitation is altogether inadmiſſible. If it be imputed to me on the other hand, that in laying down the principle ſo widely, I make encroachments on the independence of my country,—I anſwer that the objection comes from thoſe who confound

confound diſtinctneſs with independence, and forget that Britiſh connexion makes any part of our political ſyſtem: I anſwer that Britiſh connexion and Iriſh independence *both* form eſſential parts of our eſtabliſhment. Each of theſe principles ſets limits to the other; and the degree of independence which is incompatible with connexion, is alſo inconſiſtent with the ſpirit of our Conſtitution. It is becauſe the line is hard to draw, and is much expoſed to tranſgreſſion, both inadvertent, and deſigned, that Union is become the wiſh of all prudent men, who would reconcile the liberties of their country with the integrity of their empire.

The principle being eſtabliſhed, that the executive branch of the legiſlature ſhould form the point, in which theſe national bodies politick cohere, and blend themſelves into one imperial ſtate,—it remained to regulate the manner in which this principle ſhould operate. There were but two modes of proceeding to attain the end: either by ordaining that our executive ſhould be that of England; or, *vice verſa*, that the Britiſh ſhould be *ipſo facto* that of Ireland; and the latter has been made the maxim of our imperial conſtitution.

Thus the authority of the Engliſh executive in this country is a political inference; not an accidental accumulation, and falling in of powers. His Majeſty, being King of Great Britain, is *therefore* King of Ireland. The latter propoſition being a concluſion, deduced from that State

Enthymeme,

Enthymeme, in which the ſuppreſſed premiſs is the principle which I have laid down, viz. that the executive of Great Britain ſhall, in that right, poſſeſs the ſame executive authority in this country.

The connecting principle being thus eſtabliſhed in its true extent,—being meaſured with the object which it was eſtabliſhed to ſecure, and found to conſiſt comprehenſively in an union of the executive,—let us enquire whether it was violated, or adhered to, in 1789? whether we ſhould accede to your poſition, that the proceedings of our Parliament were ſo well calculated to ſecure the connexion, that we cannot from thence deduce any argument for Union? or ſhould rather admit the Speaker's doctrine, that what was then done was too glaringly unconſtitutional to be available, and may conſequently be paſſed over, without inference or notice? or laſtly, whether we ſhould acquieſce in the reaſoning of Mr. Pitt, and ſay, that though the proceeding was unwarrantable, its ſeparating tendency might nevertheleſs ſupply arguments for Union? The latter opinion is that which I have long embraced.

You acknowledge that "the act of annex-" ation forms between the two countries their ' bond and connexion;" and add that the Iriſh Parliament "preſerved the identity of the " executive power," (which you thus impliedly admit to be the ſtatutable bond,) by "*chooſing* " for their Regent, the heir apparent of the " crown." *

On

* Mr. Grattan's words.

On this aſſertion we are at iſſue: to me it ſeems that the ſpirit which may be collected from the ſtatutes of 10th H. VII. 33d H. VIII. and 4th of William and Mary, was violated in two ways, by the proceedings of 1789. Firſt, by nominating the heir apparent, before his Royal Highneſs had accepted the regency in England; and ſecondly, by inveſting him here with the full exerciſe of thoſe prerogatives, which the Britiſh parliament had limited and abridged.

In appointing that illuſtrious perſonage Regent of Ireland, and inveſting him with immediate power of giving a royal aſſent to bills, at a time when he was not yet entruſted with the cuſtody of the great ſeal of England,—we in fact repealed (and by a mere addreſs,) the firſt-mentioned of thoſe three ſtatutes; * and in doing ſo, tranſgreſſed thoſe limits which are preſcribed to the conſtitutional principle of Iriſh independence, by the no leſs conſtitutional principle of Britiſh connexion.

In appointing his Royal Highneſs Regent here, while he was not yet inveſted with that high office in Great Britain, we revoked the act of Henry VIII. which made this kingdom dependant on the crown of England, and which provided that the right of exerciſing executive power here, ſhould ariſe from the rightful poſſeſſion of that authority in Britain, and *ipſo facto* accrue, by neceſſary inference, to its poſſeſſor: and this repeal was a ſacrifice of the principle of imperial connexion, to the wild ſpirit of Iriſh independence.

* And the Iriſh Statute of the 22d of the King, by which it is enacted that no bill ſhall paſs into a law in Ireland, unleſs it be returned under the great ſeal of Great Britain.

In this premature nomination of a Regent, we acted on a principle diametrically the reverſe of that, which dictated the act of the 4th of William and Mary. That ſtatute annulled all Iriſh legiſlative acts of James which had followed his abdication; and by its recognition * of the title of his ſucceſſors, admitted that it did not require the ſanction of an Iriſh act, but flowed to them from previous ſtatutes, and imperial principles. If that ſtatute tended to maintain the connexion, then the addreſs of 1789 was calculated to diſſolve it.

I do not mean to rely upon the poſſibility which there was, that the Prince of Wales would not be regent of Great Britain: a chance too ſlight and trivial, to be taken into account. I ſtand on this poſition,—that by the connective principle of the Iriſh conſtitution, the being executive in Britain is the *ſine quâ non*—and efficient cauſe of poſſeſſing a right to executive authority here: that therefore to nominate his Royal Highneſs *previouſly* to his appointment in England was unconſtitutional; and to nominate him *ſubſequently* would be ſuperfluous: the proper mode would have been to wait until he had become Regent of Great Britain,—and then to have paſſed an act of recognition.

But if I decline inſiſting on ſo remote, and merely phyſical a poſſibility, as the heir apparent's not becoming regent of Great Britain, I cannot on the other hand admit you to rely on the Iriſh Parliament's having fixed their choice upon his Royal Highneſs; or on their having done ſo, when that

* See a note in the Preface of the laſt edition of Mr. William Johnſon's pamphlet upon Union.

that illuſtrious perſonage was already deſignated for the ſame high ſtation, by the Britiſh Legiſlature. I inſiſt on that deviation from the principles of our Conſtitution, and the law of our land, which conſiſted in our Parliament's claiming any right of choice at all: in their attempting to beſtow, what they ſhould at moſt have but acknowledged; and affecting to make that flow to the Prince from their election, which could only ariſe from his nomination in Great Britain. This being my reaſoning, it is ſuperfluous to obſerve that the circumſtance which you alledge, can not in any degree affect it: and it is the leſs neceſſary for me to ſuggeſt, that if ſeparatiſts had been deſirous to avail themſelves of the opportunity which his Majeſty's indiſpoſition offered, for politically eſtranging theſe iſlands from each other, they were likely to have proceeded as was done in 1789. They would have been cautious not to alarm the friends of Britiſh connexion. They would have made as palatable and ſeducing a choice as might be: under a nomination of the *ſame* regent appointed in Great Britain, they would have ſtolen in the precedent of a right to make a *different* election; and occupied the country in effuſions of loyalty and freedom, while they were unobſervedly laying the corner-ſtone of ſeparation.

But if it was probable almoſt to certainty, that the Prince of Wales would be appointed regent of Great Britain, it was no leſs ſure that he would not be inveſted with full regal power; but that a limited authority would be committed

to

to his hands. And how, under thoſe circumſtances, did our Parliament proceed? Having uſurped a right of election, which our Conſtitution did not give, they deemed it improper "to "encumber the regent with" thoſe "extraordi-"nary limitations," with which his authority was to be abridged in England; and thought "it "more eligible to leave him in full exerciſe of "all the executive powers."* That is to ſay, they judged it expedient, in the teeth of eſtabliſhed principles, and explicit ſtatutes, to deſtroy that unity of executive in the two countries, which conſiſts as much in the ſameneſs of the powers exerciſed, as in the identity of the perſon exerciſing thoſe powers.

It matters not to my argument, whether the Britiſh Houſes of Parliament were right, or wrong, in reſtraining the prerogatives of their regent: it is ſufficient for my purpoſe that they did reſtrain them; and that they had authority ſo to do. This right you expreſsly acknowledged in 1789; though you appear to have forgotten your own doctrines, when you inveigh (in the ſpeech before me,) againſt the miniſter, for having called on the Britiſh Parliament to exerciſe thoſe functions, which on that occaſion you admitted them to poſſeſs.

In your ſpeech of the 11th of February 1789, you ſtate "the duty of ſupplying the deficiency "in the full exerciſe of the regal power," (which reſulted from the King's indiſpoſition) "to have "devolved

* Mr. Grattan's words.

" devolved on the two Houſes of Parliament, as the " ſurviving eſtates."* I accede to this incontrovertible principle; and call on you, in return, to admit theſe inevitable deductions, viz. that the two eſtates are competent to regulate the powers which they confer; and that it is a ſound and loyal exerciſe of this privilege, to beſtow merely as much authority, as may be requiſite to give due vigour to the Government,—and to form the powers which they reſerve, into an entrenchment round the throne of their rightful Sovereign, during his temporary incapacity: ſo that whenever it ſhall be the will of Heaven to reſtore him, he may reſume his royal functions, without difficulty or obſtruction,—may find the conſtitutional balance undiſturbed,—and the juſt prerogatives of his crown undiminiſhed, and unimpaired. Theſe maxims are as obvious, as they are ſound. They do not compoſe the theory of a metaphyſical refiner, but form a plain and practicable doctrine, which every honeſt member of parliament, who recollected the oath of allegiance that he had taken, would feel himſelf bound to act upon: and to thoſe who troubled him with the jargon of " preſerving the monarchical principle," he might reply, firſt that he *was* preſerving it for his King; and ſecondly that they were ſhallow politicians, who could not ſee that the ſame portion of prerogative, which would be inadequate, as a permanent attribute of royalty, to protecting the

* Iriſh parliamenry debates.

the third eſtate from encroachment, and maintaining through a courſe of ages the conſtitutional balance undiſturbed,—might yet be fully ſufficient for the temporary purpoſes, and proviſional adminiſtration of a Regent.

That this deſtruction of the unity of executive power, which you extol as a *chef d'œuvre* of Iriſh policy and affection, went to contravene the principles of our imperial eſtabliſhment, and manifeſtly to endanger the connexion,—appears to me to be a truth, too ſelf evident for argument. I ſhall therefore only add, that as we offered the Regent a greater power here—than he was to poſſeſs in England,—ſo we might have given him leſs: the miſchiefs of ſuch a reverſal of the diſtinction are too apparent, to need being pointed out: yet this difference would have cauſed a leſs anomaly in our conſtitution, than that which the oppoſite proceeding was calculated to produce. For with the maxims upon our ſtatute book ſtaring us in the face, "declaring that this kingdom juſtly and rightfully "belongs to, and for ever *depends upon*, the imperi-"al crown of England," we gave the ſuperior power to the ſubordinate executive; and prepoſterouſly made the greater depend upon the leſs. *

I cloſe here, my view of a tranſaction, which you not only conſider as a proper ſubject for eulogium, but as entitled to the laſt praiſe to which

* I do not overlook, what I forbear repeating, that we alſo acted in direct violation of theſe fundamental laws, by affecting to elect an Iriſh Regent; when in fact his Iriſh prerogative muſt be derived to him from his being appointed executive of Great Britain.

which I ſhould have ſuppoſed it could make pretenſion, viz. that of having conduced to preſerving the connexion: a tranſaction, which Mr. Foſter, on the contrary, deems to have been ſo indefenſible, that he replies its nullity to thoſe, who urge its miſchiefs: a tranſaction, the ſeparating tendencies of which, Mr. Fitzgerald has admitted,—and has recommended the application of a preventive,—which would aſſuage the ſymptom, without removing the diſeaſe: and laſtly, a tranſaction, which Mr. Pitt, becauſe he agrees with theſe latter gentlemen, therefore holds to be no contemptible argument for Union.

The events of 1785 you paſs over in complete ſilence; nor can I blame you for avoiding a ſubject, which no diſcreet anti-unioniſt would wiſh to introduce: a ſubject the more embarraſſing at the preſent moment, becauſe it cannot be diſcuſſed, without expoſing that diſcordance, which ſo eminently diſtinguiſhes the heterogeneous oppoſition to which you belong;—rendering the connexion between its members as precarious, and infirm, as that of theſe iſlands would be, without an union.

It would be ungenerous to addreſs to your friend and fellow-labourer in the chair, thoſe invectives againſt the bill brought in by Mr. Orde, of which you were ſo liberal at the time of its introduction. Should you tell him now, as you told his predeceſſor then, "that in a commer-
"cial point of view, the propoſed arrangement
"was injurious to this country,—and that if look-
"ed

" ed at in a conſtitutional light, it put an end to " the liberties of Ireland," his ſituation would preclude him from replying, as he did then, that " he could dwell for hours on the many " benefits of that ſyſtem: that it did not vio- " late our liberties, or involve our conſtitution; " and that this country muſt be infatuated if ſhe " gave up the offer."*

In noticing thoſe inteſtine diſſenſions, which render you a truly anti-union party, I muſt do you the juſtice of doubting, whether your conduct be not more conſiſtent than that of the very reſpectable perſon, to whom I have taken the liberty of alluding. He at that time, (and I accede to his opinion,) did not deem the mere diſcretion of Parliament a ſecurity of ſufficient force; but thought that where there was ſo much at ſtake, a ſolemn compact was required—to preclude thoſe diſſenſions, to which two independent legiſlatures were liable. He feared that colliſion, in caſes of mere commerce, to which he would expoſe us on queſtions of Conſtitution. The connexion he would truſt to the good fellowſhip of the two Parliaments; aſſured (and the Regency has ſhewn with *how much* reaſon,) that even if a momentary intoxication ſhould take place, they would not ſo juſtle, as to overturn the Empire. But matters of trade being of more delicate, and high concern, he would ſecure by compact, and not confide to their good underſtanding, or good will. This undoubtedly muſt be the way in which he reaſons, ſince otherwiſe thoſe paſſages which have been

* See the parliamentary debates for 1785.

been cited from his ſpeech by the Britiſh Miniſter, would amount to arguments for Union; which he aſſures us they do not. Collating therefore his conduct in 1785, and 1789, I arrive at two very recondite truths, which ſeem, for their abſtruſeneſs, to be worth publiſhing to the world,—on the high and reſpectable authority of that gentleman: *firſt*, that diſtinct and co-ordinate Parliaments may diſſent alarmingly from each other on commercial Subjects; but that on thoſe imperial queſtions, in which their rival claims to power are more intimately involved, the moſt perfect harmony and concord may be expected: *ſecondly*, that to bind the legiſlature of this country to adopt the laws preſcribed to them by the Britiſh Parliament,* "is not to violate our liberties in the ſmalleſt degree;† but that to admit Ireland to a full participation in Britiſh freedom, and ſubject her to laws enacted by an aſſembly in which ſhe is adequately repreſented, is to annihilate our independence, and ſubvert our conſtitution!

You, Sir, (in my opinion,) are more conſiſtent: To Mr. Orde's Bill, and to the propoſed Union, you have made the ſame objection, (viz. that both meaſures are attacks on our independence;) and have, in both caſes, given a pretext to your enemies for doubting whether the independence which you defend, be compatible with the connexion which we are determined to maintain.

* Which would have been the Effect of the Propoſitions.

† See the Speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the 12th of Auguſt 1785.

I aſk pardon, Sir, for having adverted to a topick, of which you take no notice in your ſpeech; and which you were ſo prudent in omitting, that I am only ſurpriſed at your venturing upon the Regency; where you alſo ſeem to me to be treading upon very hazardous and tender ground: I for my part, have been tempted to this digreſſion, by two objects: firſt, the opportunity which it gives, of calling my reader's attention to that happy antitheſis of opinion, that diſtinct,—and even conflicting independence of ſentiment,—which inſulates the individuals of your party; and renders an incorporate Union amongſt them as hopeleſs, as it would be requiſite, towards giving ſufficient ſtrength to reſiſt the truth and juſtice of a cauſe,—to which they would, in all events, at length be forced to yield: And ſecondly, I was induced to enter on the diſcuſſion, by my wiſh to obſerve, that when you undertook to ſpecify the Britiſh Miniſter's objections, (not to our conſtitution, which he would preſerve, but to our diſtinctneſs, which he would incorporate *,) it would not have been uncandid to enumerate them all. You ſtate them to conſiſt of the caſes of Regency, and War. I find the buſineſs of the commercial propoſitions, forming a third, not unimportant topick, in the reaſoning of Mr. Pitt. I find him arguing for a Union, from the iſſue of that propoſal, in a way which at leaſt is clear, and in my

* "The Miniſter proceeds: he ſpecifies his objections to this ſettlement of 1782: the caſe of Regency is one; and War another." Mr. Grattan's words.

my mind is convincing. Tacitly aſſuming, what I preſume you will not refuſe to grant him, viz. that the connexion between the countries is to be preſerved, and would be endangered by the colliſion of coordinate Parliaments,—he proceeds to obſerve that the danger of independent legiſlatures acting with jealouſy towards each other, is an evil which can be remedied by two means only: either by ſome compact, entered into by the legiſlatures; or elſe by blending the two legiſlatures together. He defies the wit of man to point out a third expedient; (and the gage which he has thus thrown down, I confeſs I feel no diſpoſition to take up;) and having ſtated that the meaſure of compact has been tried, and found impracticable,—he infers that we muſt have a Union, if we would have an empire.

This I admit to be mere ſolid, unadorned reaſon: diveſted of every thing declamatory or epigrammatic; (which perhaps the Miniſter might think unſuitable to ſo grave a ſubject;) but I am not certain that the argument is the leſs deſerving of an anſwer, for being plain, perſpicuous, and convincing.

I ſhall not however dwell longer on what does not need to be enforced;—but ſhall attend you to thoſe parts of the Miniſter's ſpeech, which you conſider to be worthy of animadverſion.

"The Miniſter proceeds: he ſtates a ſecond in-
"ſtance, namely that of war: here again the fact
"is againſt him: the Parliament of Ireland have,
"ſince their emancipation, concurred with Eng-
"land

" land on the ſubject of war; and their concur-
" rence has been productive:" " The wild offer-
" ings of" their " liberty" have been beneficial."
" It is not the Iſle of Ceylon, the Cape of Good
" Hope, the Myſore Country, nor the Dominions
" of Tippoo," (in ſhort it is not the ſecurity or aggrandizement of that empire of which ſhe calls herſelf a part,) " that engages the attention, or
" intereſts of Ireland: it is her own internal free-
" dom and conſtitution; it is *her own idea of that*
" *internal freedom and conſtitution*; *ſuch as ſhe herſelf*
" *expreſſed, in her convention at Dungannon*: *it is*
" *for the preſervation of this (Dungannon) conſtitution,*
" *that ſhe is intereſted in Britiſh wars.* On theſe
" principles I ſuppoſe the diſſent of Ireland on the
" ſubject of war highly *improbable*: but *happy had*
" *it been* for Great Britain, happy had it been for
" his Majeſty, *had the Parliament of Ireland not curſt*
" *him with her concurrence in the American war.* I
" ſhould therefore ſuggeſt that ſhe is in leſs danger
" from the heſitation of Ireland, than from the
" precipitation of Great Britain. In his argument
" the Miniſter is weak; but in his remedy he is
" not only weak, but miſchievous. He propoſes,
" by taking away our power of diſſent, *to with-*
" *draw our motives of concurrence.* I will put this
" queſtion to my country: will you fight for the
" Lords and Commons who in the laſt century
" took away your trade, and, in the preſent, your
" conſtitution,—as for that King, Lords, and Com-
" mons, who reſtored both?—The Miniſter has
" deſtroyed this conſtitution: whoſe reſtoration

" had

" had coſt Ireland her nobleſt efforts; and was the " habitation of her loyalty: I ſay of her loyalty, " as well as of her liberty. We are accuſtomed " to behold the Kings of theſe countries in the " keeping of Parliament:" the " temple of" Ireland's " fame, as well as freedom; where ſhe had " ſeated herſelf, as ſhe vainly thought, in modeſt " ſecurity, and in a long repoſe."*

It muſt be confeſſed to be no uninſtructive example of the mutability of human opinion, to find you pronouncing an eulogium on that Parliament, which you ſo lately abandoned, with ſuch decided reprobation: to find you conſecrating, as an holy ſanctuary of liberty and fame, that place from which, ſuffocated with the ſtench of its ſervility and corruption, you had ruſhed forth with an indignant promiſe, that, until its pollutions were removed, you never would return.† Into that temple,—uncleanſed, unpurified, you re-enter,—and proſtrate yourſelf with adoration before the image which you had ſcorned. You reſume your ſeat in that aſſembly, unaltered, unreformed, from which you not only retreated, but retreated at a time, when nothing ſhort of profligacy

* Mr. Grattan's words.

† Thus I muſt interpret the firſt paragraph of your addreſs; for to inſiſt upon a diſtinction between not accepting a ſeat from the patron of a cloſe borough, and not ſoliciting a ſeat from the electors of a great city, would be a ſubtilty and ſpecial pleading far beneath you. It would be ſo, though we ſhould look no farther than the paragraph itſelf, and not corroborate the conſtruction which I have given it, by an examination of the general import of your addreſs.

fligacy the moſt flagrant and atrocious, ſhould have driven you forth: at a time when Rebellion might be ſaid to have already unſheathed the ſword; and the ſame Parliament on which you trampled, with ſuch contumelious abhorrence, was attacked by enemies from without, and traitors from within. "Without reform," you then declared, "there could be no ſelf-legiſlation."* There has been no reform; and you now oppoſe Union, becauſe it invades our privilege of ſelf-legiſlation.† You who inveighed againſt "the fabrication of boroughs, as the fabrication of a "court parliament, and the excluſion of a conſtitutional commons;—as an act more radically "ſubverſive of the fundamental rights of the "realm, than the ſhip-money, or tyranny of the "court of high commiſſion, or ſtar-chamber: *as "a ſubverſion* not merely of the fundamental laws, "but *of the conſtitutional lawgiver*," §—now offer your repentant homage to that court parliament; and aſpire to record your dying teſtimony againſt a meaſure, which would demoliſh nearly three-fourths of the borough fabrick, whilſt it left the county repreſentation undiminiſhed. To that ſame diſtinguiſhed and very loyal perſon, who fills the chair of our Houſe of Commons, (or, as you uſed to call it, our borough parliament,) who has ſo often heard with terror your projects of reform, you now addreſs (and you are liſtened to!) your reprobation of a meaſure, which would ſet theſe dangerous and wild projects at reſt for ever.

In

* Mr. Grattan's addreſs. † Mr. Grattan's ſpeech.
§ Mr. Grattan's addreſs.

In the name of conſiſtency, and of common ſenſe, which are we to attend to? your former invective, or your preſent panegyric? did you ſlander then—or do you flatter now? whether do we live under a reſtored conſtitution, regained by the efforts of a revered King, Lords, and Commons? or have our rights and liberties been in the duſt ſince the reign of James I.? and is our Houſe of Commons a mere court gang, which has diſſolved the legal parliament, and thruſt "the conſtitutional lawgiver" out of doors? are you really become intereſted about the fate "of parliaments and "princes?" or do you continue indifferent as to how "it may pleaſe Heaven to diſpoſe of them," and remain anxious only for "the liberties of the "people?" * thoſe liberties which our conſtitution has entruſted to the guardianſhip of the three eſtates; but which your ſpeech ſeems to commit to the convention at Dungannon.

You put this queſtion to your country, will they "fight with zeal for the Lords and Commons who deprived them of their trade; and took away their conſtitution?" the quere appears to me to be of the ſame complexion with that doctrine, which refers the ſecurity of one part of the empire to its means of injuring the remaining portion: which relies on Ireland's "powers of retaliation;" and enumerates amongſt the ſafeguards of our imperial conſtitution, our being able to "affect the navy of "England, by regulations regarding our proviſions;

* Concluſion of Mr. Grattan's Speech.

" ſions; † and to affect her empire, by commercial " treaties with the reſt of the world." Such doctrines repreſent theſe iſlands as for ever engaged in occupying ſtate-poſitions, and guarding their reſpective frontiers againſt mutual inroad; and form a ſyſtem, which places our ... nexion on the broad and ſolid baſis of eternal jealouſy, eſtrangement, and diſtruſt. Such doctrines would ſupply an anſwer,—if the reports of our ſecret committees, the ſevere code upon our ſtatute book, and the devaſtation of our country had not already furniſhed one more irrefragable and convincing,—to thoſe fair promiſes which were made in 1782; on which, in concurrence with the Speaker, you rely: they would prove to us that the great national arrangement which then took place had *not* " ſecured the tranquillity of Ireland; " or united the affections as well as intereſts of " both kingdoms :"‡ they would ſhew us that the Viceroy was miſtaken, in ſuppoſing that by that ſettlement " the two kingdoms were made one; " indiſſolubly connected in unity of intereſts, and unity of conſtitution;" § and would demonſtrate that the ſeeds of ſeparation ere too deeply ſown, to be eradicated by any meaſure leſs conſolidating than Union.

But in all that declamation which I have laſt extracted from your ſpeech, where lurks your refutation

† I have heard it conjectured that the maiming of cattle which prevailed about a year ago, in the Weſt of Ireland, was a mere reducing of this conſtitutional principle to practice.

‡ Addreſs of the Iriſh Commons in 1782.

§ Speech of the Lord Lieutenant in 1782.

tation of what the Britiſh miniſter has objected to the preſent order of things, conſidered with a view to the ſafety of Britiſh connexion?

Mr. Pitt's argument on this part of the ſubject, as I underſtand it, is as follows: Theoretically ſpeaking, two independent legiſlatures expoſe the empire, which they diſtract, to diſſolution: in the caſe of Great Britain and Ireland, experience has moſt alarmingly reduced this theory to practice. "In the only inſtance," (that of the Regency) "which has occurred, in which the countries could "feel the effects of jarring legiſlatures, they did "feel it:"* they felt it ſhake the imperial connexion to its foundations. Therefore, in aboliſhing the preſent ſyſtem, we are not complying with the airy notions of metaphyſical ſpeculators; but are ceaſing to act upon a theory, which we find to be ruinous in practice. What occurred in one caſe, may happen in another; and it would not be prudent to riſk a ſecond political convulſion, where the one from which we are eſcaped had proved nearly fatal.

Whether the right of chooſing a Regent, which the Iriſh Parliament practically claimed in 1789, was one which really flowed to them from their independence, (qualified as that independence is by the act of annexation,) might be doubted; and by me the exiſtence of ſuch a right is denied: and therefore, however ſtrong the argument may be, which that tranſaction furniſhes againſt the ſyſtem that produced it, yet it is not ſo cogent a reaſon, as may be drawn from a caſe where the

* Mr. Pitt's ſpeech.

right of the Iriſh Legiſlature will not admit of controverſy; yet where the exerciſe of that right muſt threaten the connexion. Such is the caſe of queſtions regarding peace or war. "Will any "man contend," ſays Mr. Pitt, "that the inde- "pendent Legiſlature of Ireland has not a right "to diſcuſs the queſtion of peace and war? Will "any man tell me that it is not poſſible for the "two Parliaments to entertain different opinions "on theſe important points?" or "taking it as "the baſis of the argument, that the connexion "between the two countries is neceſſary for their "mutual ſecurity,—is it ſafe, or prudent, to leave "it expoſed to all thoſe accidents,"* which may ariſe from the exerciſe or the abuſe of independence?

Such is the argument which you call weak; but which you have left unanſwered: an argument, involving this evident and material truth,—that ſince it is more preſumable that our Parliament ſhould at ſome time, *exerciſe an undoubted right*, (ſuch as that of diſcuſſing the queſtion of peace and war,) than that they ſhould *uſurp a privilege*, which their independence did not in fact confer, (ſuch as that of chooſing an executive,) therefore the preſent ill cemented imperial eſtabliſhment is even more objectionable and inſecure, from its giving birth to ſuch a right,—than from its having led to ſuch an uſurpation.

But

* Mr. Pitt's ſpeech.

But how ſtrongly do your arguments go to ſhew the diſſenſion likely, which the miniſter has repreſented as merely poſſible!

You admit his poſition that the right exiſts: (indeed its exiſtence cannot be denied;) but you rely on the improbability of its being exerted.

I might with great truth obſerve that an object of ſuch moment, as the ſecurity of the connexion, ſhould not be truſted to probabilities, where certainty can be had: but I chuſe rather to meet you on the ground which you have choſen, and to inſiſt that your own reaſoning refutes your own aſſertion. "Happy," you tell us, "had it "been for Great Britain, if the Iriſh Parliament "had not concurred in the American war."—Here we ſeem to have deſcended from the refinements of abſtract theory, to all the groſs and palpable realities of practice; and to have got upon, not a mere ſpeculative right, but one, of which you recommend the occaſional exerciſe, as highly beneficial to the empire. Is it to be doubted that ſome future members of the Iriſh Parliament, of ſufficient political influence to carry their point, might from factious motives, or miſtaken views, act upon your principle, and prevail on the legiſlature of this country to diſſent from that of Britain, on this imperial ſubject? yet that the exerciſe of this right muſt more than hazard the connexion, ſeems to me to be a poſition, too clear for argument. Thus the queſtion appears to be whether, if we wiſh the iſlands to remain connected, it be expedient to correct a ſyſtem, which gives birth to rights

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that are likely to be exerciſed,—and which cannot be exerted with ſafety to the connexion? whether the Britiſh miniſter was not warranted in charging us with having "aboliſhed one conſtitution,—and forgot to form another?" that is to ſay, with having deſtroyed one mode of ſecuring the connexion, and not ſubſtituted any other in its place? whether, in a word, the following poſition be not as true, as it is extenſive,—that there is no effectual method of connecting *diſtinct* nations, unleſs by making one depend upon the other: and therefore that two countries, which would be connected, and yet free,—can no otherwiſe obtain both wiſhes, than by Union?

"It is not the iſle of Ceylon, or the Cape of "Good Hope," it is not the ſucceſs of Britiſh arms, nor the glory or proſperity of the Britiſh empire,—"that engage the attention, or intereſts "of Ireland: it is for the preſervation of her own "idea of her *internal* freedom and conſtitution, "*ſuch as ſhe expreſſed in her convention at Dungan-*"*non*, that ſhe is intereſted in Britiſh wars."*

Is this the ſpecimen you give, of Iriſh cordiality to Britain? is it from ſuch poſitions you infer that the empire is already too well cemented, by the zeal of Iriſh loyalty and affection, to need any political arrangements, towards conſolidating it more? Is it thus you demonſtrate the improbability on which you rely, of Ireland's diſſenting on the ſubject of war from Britain? yes, Sir, I can very well

* Mr. Grattan's words.

well conceive that thoſe, who are only ſolicitous to reduce to practice, the principles of a Dungannon conſtitution,—who, ſtoically indifferent to the fate of Parliaments and Princes, are only anxious for what they are pleaſed to call the liberties of the people,—who regard the legiſlature as the creature, and the populace as the creator, and would ſacrifice government and good order, to the monſtrous idol which they have ſet up,—I can well ſuppoſe that ſuch may be "intereſted in Britiſh wars:" I ſhould only doubt whether the intereſt which they felt was on the ſide of Britain: I ſhould only doubt whether they would zealouſly co-operate with England, in putting down the very principles which they adored. In a word, (and to conclude my examination of this topick,) you ſeem to me not only to have failed to refute,—but to have ſtrongly corroborated the reaſoning of Mr. Pitt; who only inſiſted on the *poſſibility* of an event,—which all who admit your doctrines muſt conſider as even *probable*, in a high degree.

You accuſe the Miniſter of "concurring with "the men whom he executed, in thinking the "Iriſh Parliament a grievance; and differing in "the remedy only: they propoſing to ſubſtitute a "Republic; and he the yoke of the Britiſh Par-"liament. *

I ſhall not ſtop to condole with you on the fate of thoſe unfortunate reformers, (the ſame whom a morning paper has,—no doubt, erroneouſly,—repreſented you to have deſcribed as ſhedding their blood

* Mr. Grattan's words.

blood for their country, on a ſcaffold;) but ſhall proceed at once to aſſure you that Mr. Pitt does not think the Iriſh Parliament a grievance; and therefore propoſes that, after Union, the Iriſh Parliament ſhall remain: he only conſiders its diſtinctneſs as a miſchief; which therefore he wiſhes to have remedied, by incorporation.

Neither does he intend "to ſubſtitute the yoke of the Britiſh Parliament," in the room of, what it is not long ſince you pronounced to be, the ſlaviſh yoke of the "Borough Parliament" of Ireland: his project merely is to defeat the machinations of ſeparatiſts and traitors, by wreſting a political weapon from their hands, and impoſing the (to them) intolerable yoke of three well cemented imperial eſtates: His deſign appears to be, that from henceforth the repreſentatives of Ireland ſhall contribute to enact laws which ſhall be binding upon Yorkſhire;—and the Yorkſhire Members to enact laws which ſhall be binding upon Ireland.

But ſee whether Union, inſtead of impoſing, may not rather remove the yoke of the Britiſh Parliament. See whether connexion, and diſtinct independence, be not ſituations ſo incompatible with each other, that the ſettlement of 1782, unable to reconcile them, wiſely ſacrificed the latter in a great degree.

That Ireland is dependant on the Britiſh Crown —will be admitted: it remains to enquire whether it is not conſequently dependant on the Britiſh Parliament.

The Royal perſon is undoubtedly ſacred: perſonally,

ſonally, the King cannot be called to account. But his government is ſubject to Parliamentary inveſtigation,—by virtue of that principle, which renders Miniſters reſponſible for their meaſures.—Obſerve the conſequence.

Carefully to preſerve Ireland to the empire, is the obvious duty of the Britiſh cabinet: a duty, for the neglect, or breach of which, the Miniſters will be heavily reſponſible to the Engliſh Parliament. But our three eſtates cannot enact a valid law, without the act * and concurrence of a Britiſh Miniſter,—the ſervant of a Britiſh Parliament; and that Miniſter, of courſe, will not validate any meaſure, which may draw upon him the diſpleaſure of the legiſlature, to which he is amenable for his conduct. Thus, can we have any law, againſt the will of the Britiſh cabinet? or is the pleaſure of an Engliſh adminiſtration likely to differ from that of an Engliſh Parliament? Britiſh Miniſters ſtand, themſelves, beyond the ſphere of our control; and ſhould we even viſit their defaults upon our own, ſuch injuſtice would be as ineffectual, as it was cruel.

Thus Ireland, by the ſettlement of 1782, acquired merely the right of excluſively originating her own laws †;—but ſtill, by virtue of the connecting principle of our conſtitution, (and without ſuppoſing any abuſe, or encroachment on the part of England,) we remained ſubject, through the miniſter, to the control of the Britiſh Parliament;—if ſubjection

* Affixing the great ſeal.

† A right moſt explicitly, and practically recogniſed by the Britiſh Miniſter's admiſſion that the countries cannot be united but by mutual conſent, and by virtue of two laws, one originating from the Iriſh, and the other from the Britiſh legiſlature.

ſubjection to the deputy be ſubjection to his principal: and every ſtatute, which we have paſſed ſince that period, may be conſidered as a ſort of charter, under the great ſeal of England, granted to this country by the King of Great Britain, with the tacit conſent of the two other Britiſh eſtates, and at the petition of the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland.

That dependence of this kingdom on the Britiſh Crown, which is declared by the act of annexation, is either merely nominal, or it is real: if it be but nominal, then ſo is our connexion: and the two countries are at this moment in a ſtate of ſeparation; not held together by any principle whatſoever. If it be real, it involves a dependence on the Britiſh Parliament: a dependence, which is not the leſs ſubſtantial, for being indirect; and which puts us in a ſituation incomparably leſs free, than that in which we ſhould be placed by Union; inaſmuch as it lays us at the feet of a Parliament, which the conſtituent body of Ireland does not contribute to return. *

Of the ſoundneſs of this laſt mentioned principle, the Iriſh nation was fully ſenſible in 1782; and they

* It is true that it would be an *abuſe* of this control, if the Britiſh Parliament ſhould obſtruct our right of ſelf-legiſlation, or cenſure the Miniſter for having put the great ſeal to any act, which did not threaten the connexion. But in the moment that Anti-Unioniſts reply to my reaſoning, by inſiſting on the liberality and equity of England, and the improbability of her abuſing any influence which ſhe may poſſeſs, they ſave me the trouble of refuting thoſe other inconſiſtent arguments of theirs, which repreſent the danger that is to reſult to this country after Union, from Great Britain's abuſe of that ſuperiority which the relative number of her repreſentatives is ſaid to give.

they recogniſed its truth in that very aſſertion, which I have heard perverted into an argument againſt uniting the countries. When our Houſe of Commons repreſented to his Majeſty in that year, that "the kingdom of Ireland was a diſtinct kingdom, "with a Parliament of her own, the ſole legiſlature "thereof,"—they meant to alledge their diſtinctneſs, as an argument againſt their being bound by the acts of a Britiſh legiſlature; and the reaſoning palpably implies this poſition, that the caſe would be different, if the countries were united: ſince in that caſe, the Iriſh people could not juſtly complain of being bound by the acts of a legiſlature, in which Ireland was adequately repreſented.

But, "inſtead of a conſtitution, which eſtabliſhed "peace in Ireland, Mr. Pitt revives a principle which "produced war in America."* He ſpeaks the ſame language with his ſword in this country, which Lord North articulated, (with the ſame organ,) to the colonies; and the fabrick which he builds in the room of that which he has deſtroyed, excludes the people, and extinguiſhes the conſtitution.†

The conſtitution which you thus regret, is the ſame which we enjoyed, (or, as you then thought, which we ſuffered,) when you wrote your addreſs to the citizens of Dublin. The Catholics ſtill groan under the ſame yoke which oppreſſed them at that time, viz. toleration the moſt perfect, civil freedom the moſt complete, and no inconſiderable ſhare of political power. The Legiſlature is ſtill, as it was then, unreformed: more connected with the property, than with the turbulence of the country; and encumbered

* Mr. Grattan's words.

† Subſtance of Mr. Grattan's ſpeech.

with the pompous impediment of a houſe of lords, ſtanding between us and the bleſſings of a Dunganon conſtitution.

The "peace" which that conſtitution has "eſtabliſhed," we have all witneſſed. The convention and gunpowder acts,—the inſurrection bill,—the acts of indemnity and attainder,—are all teſtimonies, upon record, of a tranquillity,—which however received ſome temporary interruption in 1798: a tranquillity of which you now appear to be more ſenſible, than you were when you acquainted your conſtituents with the laſt ineffectual "effort," which your party had made "before the cloſe of Parliament, for the re-"ſtoration of domeſtic peace;"* and inſiſted on the exiſtence of a morbid and irritating cauſe, "which, "till Parliament ſhould be reformed, muſt agitate "this country for ever."†

But Mr. Pitt "revives a principle, which produced war in America:" When has Government adopted *any* meaſure, which did not recal the colonies to your mind? If I look into the parliamentary debates, in every chart of your political diſcoveries, I find America to occupy the greateſt ſpace. In your addreſs, I find you ringing her ſtory in our ears. To the continuance of that ſyſtem, to which Union would put an end, you then oppoſed the warning example of America.‡ To reſiſt the Union which is reſorted to for the correction of that former ſyſtem, America

* Mr. Grattan's addreſs. † Ibid.

‡ "We ſaw the miniſtry purſue that very plan towards Ireland, "which they regretted they had not reſorted to in the caſe of "America, viz. acceding to the American claim, and then re-"eſtabliſhing Britiſh dominion, by influencing the American Aſ-"ſembly."——Mr. Grattan's addreſs.

America is the ground on which you chuſe to ſtand. It is the Othello's handkerchief, with which you reply to arguments, and facts,—and record your incurable jealouſies of England.

From a loyal member of Parliament, I am ſurpriſed to hear this monotonous and inceſſant din: to the mouth of a ſeparatiſt ſuch language would be very ſuitable. The ſyllogiſm would run thus: —The conduct of Great Britain juſtified America in ſeparating herſelf by force: But England is purſuing the ſame conduct towards this country; therefore Ireland would do well to ſeparate from Great Britain.

But the fabrick which, with that *vox ferrea*, the Britiſh ſword, Mr. Pitt now calls on theſe two countries to build, "excludes the people; and extinguiſhes the Conſtitution." *

Theſe poſitions are neither obvious, nor unimportant enough, to warrant you in aſſuming them, without entering upon any proof; and I for my part muſt take the liberty of diſputing both.

How does the Miniſter's ſcheme exclude the people? not by encreaſing the relative quantity of county repreſentation; and diminiſhing the number of thoſe borough members, who, you have told us, do not *form*, but *exclude* the legitimate commons; ſubverting the conſtitutional lawgiver, *and working the people completely out of the lower houſe of Parliament.* † Not by encreaſing the value and influence of the elective franchiſe, in the hands of the great Catholic body of the people; who, it will not be denied, muſt have an incomparably greater ſhare in contributing to return the county, than the borough repreſentation.

How

* Mr. Grattan's aſſertion. † Mr. Grattan's Addreſs.

How then is the conſequence to be produced, which your foreboding mind deplores? By the effect which the meaſure will have on Catholic claims.

Let us obſerve what will be its operation upon theſe. So far from depriving them of one atom of their preſent privileges, it will ſecure to them their perpetual enjoyment; leaving them conſequently and irrevocably poſſeſſed of the inference which ſome of their advocates deduce; viz. that their having acquired ſo much is a reaſon for granting more: while, at the ſame time, neither the principle, nor any of the articles of Union will directly bar their claims; or pronounce expreſsly, or by the remoteſt implication, that the Catholic body ſhall obtain nothing more.

Therefore, we can only eſtimate the effect of the meaſure on their proſpects, by comparing the favourable chances which their preſent circumſtances produce, with thoſe which muſt reſult from the ſituation in which they would be placed by Union.

To what principle do the adverſaries of Catholic pretenſion refer their oppoſition? they inſiſt on the danger to which the eſtabliſhed church would be expoſed, by putting power into the hands of a ſect, which greatly exceeds our Proteſtant inhabitants in number. This is an obſtacle, which I have your authority for aſſerting that Union would remove: you ſtate Catholics to be to Proteſtants, at preſent, in the ratio of three to one; and that after Union they will be as one to four; and this ſtatement involves an admiſſion, that the meaſure would improve their hopes, by removing an argument which is now urged againſt their claims.

They

They have ſubmitted their pretenſions to the legiſlature of this country; and their application has not been attended with ſucceſs. The removal of every incapacity attached to their religion, was one of the principal meaſures which you wiſhed to carry; and your addreſs informs them that you quitted Parliament, in deſpair of ſucceeding.

Have the Catholics any good ground for expecting—that the ſentiments of the Iriſh legiſlature will become more favourable to their claims? The Corporation of Dublin is not leſs adverſe to them, than to an Union. The City Repreſentatives, the Speaker, and ſeveral other loyal members of the preſent oppoſition (of whom I ſhould not do juſtice to my own ſentiments, if I ſpoke otherwiſe than with reſpect,) have not I believe expreſſed any ſtrong opinions in favour of Catholic pretenſions; nor given that body reaſon to ſuppoſe that, if the preſent meaſure were loſt by the reſiſtance of Proteſtant aſcendants,—the ſame powerful influence which rejected Union, would beſtow political privilege upon them.

Therefore, as Union would refer their claims, not to that legiſlature by which they have already been rejected,—not to a "borough Parliament," before which you deſpaired of ever ſucceeding,—but to an unprejudiced tribunal, which has delivered no opinion, and would hear the claimants under circumſtances more favourable to their petition,—it ſeems to follow that the meaſure muſt improve their views: and the liberal conceſſions which have been already made to that body,—the foundation of the ſeminary at Maynooth,—the ſuppoſed project of connecting with an Union, ſome proper ſupport for the Roman Catholic clergy, and

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ſome ſyſtem of regulation for their church,—all tend to ſhew that government is not bigotted againſt that religion; but that thoſe who profeſs it, will have the full advantage of all arguments which may reſult from Union, in favour of their demands.

Neither Proteſtants nor Catholics ſhould forget what happened in the reign of Anne. They ſhould recollect that the enaction of that penal code, which has been repealed by the liberality of modern times, took place after an ineffectual attempt, on the part of Ireland, to obtain that Union,—which is now reſiſted with ſo much violence, and ſo little reaſon. This fact records the opinion of the legiſlature in thoſe days, that the incompatibility of Catholic power with Proteſtant ſecurity—was an effect, produced by our diſtinctneſs, and which conſequently Union would remove.

But let us diſmiſs the numerous arguments, which offer themſelves to prove that this meaſure is favourable to the proſpects of the Roman Catholic; (and favourable, without furniſhing ground of jealouſy to the Proteſtant; ſince the only way in which Union can promote Catholic views, is by rendering the eſtabliſhed Church impregnably ſecure:) I ſay let us wave thoſe arguments; and merely aſſume what cannot be denied, that the meaſure will not diminiſh their preſent grounds of expectation. The natural inference ſeems to be, that they ſhould examine the other conſequences which Union will produce. That they ſhould look beyond the mere ſubordinate concerns of their ſect; and recollect that by being Catholics they have not ceaſed to be Iriſhmen,—deeply intereſted,

intereſted, as ſuch, in the proſperity of this Country. Thoſe advantages, which will reſult from the reſtoration of order and tranquillity—the ſecurity of property—and introduction of Britiſh capital, induſtry, and adventure,—while they accrue to all the inhabitants of Ireland, muſt be eſpecially beneficial to the Catholic body; inaſmuch as theſe form the great maſs of our people. Thus their real weight and conſequence would be augmented, even though their political privileges ſhould remain the ſame; while the meaſure which thus added to their proſperity, would do ſo without at all leſſening their hopes.

But how does Union operate to exclude the Catholics? by making them one to four; inſtead of being three to one. * Their admiſſion to Parliament you ſeem to ſpeak of as a likely event; (though your object is to ſtimulate their prejudices againſt a Union,) but why (ſay you) will they become admiſſible? becauſe they ceaſe to be any thing: becauſe their relative proportion being deſtroyed, their phyſical conſequence is extinguiſhed for ever. Under ſuch circumſtances, their admiſſion will be of little avail.†

I hope theſe maxims are not illuſtrative of your principles: I am ſure they are deſerving of ſerious attention. They ſeem to mark it as your opinion, that unleſs Catholics be left formidable, they ſhould not deign to be free; for that they ceaſe to be any thing, when they ceaſe to be dangerous to the eſtabliſhed church. The Catholic individual, who acts upon your doctrines, —muſt not conſider himſelf as an unit,‡ nor yet as an Iriſhman. He muſt neither be content, upon a compariſon of his condition with that of any ſingle Proteſtant,

* Mr. Grattan's Speech. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

Proteſtant, to find the amount of his conſtitutional privilege to be the ſame; nor yet muſt the corps to which he links his intereſts, and holds himſelf inſeparably to belong, be the general population of the empire in which he lives. No! this would be to admit the deteſtable principle of Union; and violate the diſtinct independence of his church, by identifying its intereſts with thoſe of the eſtabliſhed religion. All is loſt, unleſs the two varieties of chriſtianity be preſerved in a ſtate of reciprocal eſtrangement, and, as it were, electrical repulſion. Every Catholic of your ſchool muſt, on principle, be a Sectarian. *Ita ſe quiſque extollit, ut deprimat alium*: he inſiſts on being equal in political rights to the Proteſtant; and that his ſect ſhall be far more numerous than the members of the eſtabliſhed church. Before he will pronounce that he is ſatisfied with his condition, he examines the muſter-roll of that Catholic body, which his ſyſtem repreſents as drawn out in hoſtile array againſt their Proteſtant fellow ſubjects; and if the ratio be three to one, he is content. But to alter or impair this relative proportion—would be to extinguiſh for ever the phyſical conſequence of his ſect; and prevent it from ſo practiſing the prudent ſyſtem of "annoyance," as to keep the eſtabliſhed Religion properly *in check*.

I call upon the loyal Catholics, (a very reſpectable, and I believe numerous deſcription,) to diſclaim arguments which—by implying that the freedom is not worth accepting, which is rendered conſiſtent with the ſafety of the eſtabliſhed church,—muſt excite every friend to order and good government againſt their claims: doctrines which teem with confuſion and alarm; recommending to yield, not to the

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juſtice of the claim, but merely to the violence and number of the claimants; and concede to that *vis conſili expers*, which threatens an abuſe of the powers that it extorts:—doctrines, which may be thought to extend privilege to the Catholics, not from liberal motives, or veneration for the different branches of the Chriſtian faith; ſtill leſs as an encouragement, or reward to loyal conduct; but becauſe power in the hands of a turbulent and unenlightened multitude, might be converted to an inſtrument, for propagating thoſe principles, which (to the ruin of Catholic, as well as Proteſtant freedom, property, and ſecurity,) would form a conſtitution of Dungannon fabrick:—doctrines, in a word, which place the dignity of the Catholic on the ſame reſpectable footing with that of thoſe Northern tribes, (poſſeſſed of all the phyſical conſequence which numbers give,) who overturned the Roman empire, extinguiſhed the liberal arts, and for ages involved Europe in the gloom of ferocious barbariſm.

But "Union is not only an excluſion of the people: it is alſo an extinction of the conſtitution." *

This laſt is a very material and relevant poſition; and if well founded, ſhould decide every Iriſhman againſt the meaſure which you uſe it to oppoſe. But where are your proofs? You have not adduced one. Is it becoming to enter the liſts, on ſuch an occaſion as the preſent, armed for the combat with nothing better than a dogma? a weak, ſubverſive, and refuted aſſertion? You cannot deny that this meaſure meets with countenance from much of the property,

* Mr. Grattan's words.

the intelligence, and virtue of the country; and you flippantly alledge that the plan which they thus zealously ſupport, ſo manifeſtly extinguiſhes the conſtitution,—that you will not waſte time in proving ſo plain a truth!—This you ſtate, *en paſſant*, as the effect of a meaſure which I, on the contrary, in my conſcience believe to be that, which ſince Ireland was a country, has received the moſt honourable and diſintereſted ſupport; and been encountered with the moſt corrupt and ſelfiſh oppoſition.* You told your Conſtituents in 1797, that they had no Conſtitution:—that for an honeſt man to ſit as a repreſentative in Parliament, was to banter the abuſed people with an empty, ineffectual, and deluſive form:—and now, when you aſſert the value and dignity of the Iriſh Commons, and proteſt againſt the ſurrender of a conſtitution, which you ſo lately declared we had not to ſurrender,—you ſeem to think that this inconſiſtency requires no explanation. After the termination of a long and formidably-threatened inſurrection, which ſpoke in a voice of thunder the precarioufneſs of our ſituation, when the royal wiſdom calls on Parliament to profit by experience, and prevent a repetition of the dangers which they have eſcaped,—ſo far from deciding, you will not even deliberate; but, under the ſhelter of a conſtitutional etiquette,† (ſuited to circumſtances leſs emergent

* It is almoſt unneceſſary to obſerve that I qualify this aſſertion with thoſe exceptions, which a reſpect for Parliament, and a regard for the rules of decorum, and of truth enjoin. I am *ſincere and ſerious*, both in laying down the poſition, and admitting the exceptions.

† Which conſiders the ſpeech from the throne as the ſpeech of the Miniſter.

gent and extraordinary than the preſent,) you tell his Majeſty that he has broken the compact between King and people, and propoſed to us an abſolute ſurrender of our conſtitution. A nobleman, whoſe important ſervices to his ſovereign have ſhed, even on the ungrateful ſeparatiſt, a portion of that luſtre which they procured for the empire, avows himſelf ambitious to cloſe his honourable career by giving proſperity to Ireland, and ſecurity to that empire: but you tell him, that to do this would be to ſubvert our conſtitution. The Houſe of Lords (I believe unanimouſly,*) proclaim their concurrence with the Royal views, and you (conſtructively voting them an uſeleſs eſtate,) pronounce the ſcheme—of which they have expreſſed their approbation—to be a plain ſurrender of the conſtitution.

" Nineteen of the principal counties of Ireland—
" all the great commercial towns, Dublin excepted,
" —five-ſevenths of the country in local extent,—
" and much more than that proportion in property,
" —have called for the diſcuſſion of the meaſure,—
" and the majority of them have expreſſed their
" conviction that it is a beneficial one;"‡ but this opinion you encounter with an unſupported, unargued aſſertion; and tell them without periphraſis, or ceremony, that they are all traitorous ſubvertors of the Iriſh conſtitution. I ſhall not ſay whether ſuch language tends to excite indignation; but I am ſure it is not calculated to produce conviction. Nay, mortified at perceiving the change of public opinion,

—enraged

* Certainly by an immenſe majority.

‡ Speech of Lord Caſtlereagh, on Wedneſday Jan. 15th, 1800.

—enraged to find thoſe prejudices ſubſiding, which alone concealed the weakneſs and deformity of their cauſe,—your party attempt to brand, with the title of apoſtates, all thoſe who have liſtened to reaſon, or reflection: who have magnanimouſly retracted an haſty opinion, and preferred encountering the obloquy of a faction, to working the injury of their country.

Repugnance to Union was a ſentiment which, when the meaſure was firſt ſtirred, it was excuſable if not laudable to entertain: a tranſient ſentiment, dictated by that national ſpirit, which even in its exceſſes, inſpires us with reſpect. But it is the boaſt of an upright man to renounce an error; and the privilege of a rational creature to diſcover truth. When I read the able publications to which this queſtion has given birth,—when I obſerved the temperate and conciliating conduct of the ſiſter country,—and above all when I conſidered the utility of the meaſure itſelf,—too manifeſt to be long unnoticed, or unacknowledged,—I truſted that the public ſentiment would change,—and never ſhall concur in diſparaging thoſe perſons, whoſe only fault is their having fulfilled my hopes, by yielding to conviction: nor ſhall I on the other hand diſſemble my contempt for thoſe, whoſe objections to Union are ſtill unremoved, becauſe not having ariſen from the tranſient feeling of a generous mind, they muſt endure as long as the corrupt and ſelfiſh motives from whence they ſprung. You have quoted Tacitus—in anſwer to ſome doctrines of Mr. Pitt: he is a writer of great and merited authority, particularly eſtimable for his

juſt

juſt reflexions; and has ſomewhere ſketched the character of that obſtinacy, of which the anti-union inflexibles are ſo vain. *Ea eſt in re prava pervicacia: ipſi fidem vocant.*

But, to return to the ſubject from which I have digreſſed,—your aſſertion, that Union ſubverts the Conſtitution, is not only altogether unſupported, but fraught with implications the moſt dangerous and ſubverſive. The articles yet unſettled, and unknown, you encounter the mere principle in its moſt abſtract form; and pronounce that, under whatever circumſtances, and upon whatever terms, to incorporate with England would be to ſurrender our Conſtitution: at leaſt that it would be ſo, unleſs Ireland were, (in violation of every principle of policy or juſtice) allowed to ſend as many repreſentatives to the Imperial Parliament, as were returned by England; notwithſtanding the ſuperior wealth, extent, and population of this latter.

Now I defy you or any man to ſupport this extenſive propoſition, without at the ſame time eſtabliſhing a principle, which will, if admitted, invalidate the Union that early in the preſent century incorporated Scotland with England.

Yet if that Union was invalid, (which undoubtedly it was, if your principle be a ſound one,) his Majeſty poſſeſſes no dominions north of Berwick; and the acts which have paſſed at Weſtminſter for the laſt ninety years are the mere uſurpations of an illegal aſſembly. Thus the operation of the principle on which alone you can ſupport the aſſertion that you have made, is at once to cancel

one

one of the title deeds by which the King holds his crown; and to turn the ſtatutes of the Britiſh Parliament for near a century to waſte paper. Yet amongſt them we meet thoſe proceedings with reſpect to Ireland, which conſtitute the ſolemn compact of 1782, whoſe finality has been ſo perverſely made an argument againſt Union.

Or if you grant that the lapſe of ninety years may, by this time, have given a lame title to his Majeſty, and infuſed a portion of efficacy into the laws paſſed in the United Parliament; and that the acquieſcence of Scotland may at length have cemented into ſome thing of ſolid and regular eſtabliſhment, that originally unconſtitutional and incoherent maſs, which, with the aid of ſome Scotch ſtateſmen, of no better reputation for knowledge or integrity than himſelf, the ignorant Lord Somers had put together, (Lord Somers who had already expoſed his arbitrary principles, in a work of his, commonly called the Bill of Rights;) I ſay ſuppoſing you admit all this, yet ſurely you will vindicate the memory of thoſe heroes, who before any preſcription had yet ariſen, to ſanctify the ſubverſive act of incorporation, took arms in 1715 for their liberties, and their Prince; and ſhed their blood for their country, *on the ſcaffold and in the field!* Nay a caſuiſt might even doubt whether in 1745 the ſettlement had become ſufficiently ruſty to be entitled to allegiance; and whether thoſe were Rebels who fell at Culloden, and Tower Hill.

This reaſoning, I confeſs, has been urged by me before; and I aſk my readers pardon for the repetition of

of what ſeems to me to have ſome weight, and has never been refuted.

The inference which I would draw from it is this: —not that any man ſhould ſupport Union, who thinks it an impolitic meaſure; but that thoſe who reſiſt it, ſhould ſubſtitute argument for aſſertion; and ſhould alſo ceaſe to found their oppoſition upon doctrines ſubverſive of the moſt ſettled principles, and ſavouring of treaſon to the King and Conſtitution.

The topick which I have been laſt treating leads naturally to one, which has been ſo very amply diſcuſſed already, that it is far from my intention to enter deeply on it now: a topick which you flutter round, and occaſionally touch, but on which you are too circumſpect to dwell: I mean that competence of Parliament, which as you could not venture to controvert directly, it may be doubted whether you were quite candid in impeaching by implication.

This competence is ſo obvious, that I believe I may even claim to have demonſtrated it myſelf. As for ability, there was no opportunity of diſplaying any; but as it requires no talents to ſhew that two and two make four, it ſuited well with the mediocrity of mine, to undertake the proof of an almoſt equally evident propoſition. Humble however as my pretenſions are, I am too proud to boaſt of having ſucceeded in eſtabliſhing that, which it would be diſgraceful to the youngeſt man of my profeſſion even to doubt; and which, if a perſon of the firſt legal reputation ſhould deny, I might be in ſuſpence as to whether he was ignorant or inſincere, but I muſt pronounce him to be one or other in an eminent degree.

gree. Therefore inſtead of exulting at having accompliſhed a taſk on which ſuperior men would ſcarcely deign to enter,—inſtead of being vain of having merely repeated the alphabet of our conſtitution,—I bluſh to have been obliged to inſtruct thoſe who ſhould have known better, in the accidence, and elements of the government under which they live; and my excuſe for having undertaken ſo childiſh an employment muſt be found in that clamorous and deciſive denial of legiſlative ſovereignty, which I am ſorry to think iſſued from an Iriſh bar, and even found its way into an Iriſh Houſe of Commons.

Without preſuming to do any thing ſo fulſome as to quote myſelf, I truſt I may be permitted to decline repeating here, thoſe arguments which I have already ſubmitted to the publick.—I ſhall therefore merely beg to be informed by the Anti-Union ſages of the law, what Lord Coke means by pronouncing the power of Parliament to be "ſo abſolute as it cannot be confined within any bounds?" or Blackſtone, by declaring it to be "entruſted with deſpo-"tick power, by the conſtitution?" How this latter is to be conſtrued, or his authority evaded, when deſcending to particulars, he lays it down that the legiſlature may, without exceeding their legitimate powers, "change and create afreſh the conſtitution "of this kingdom, and of Parliaments,—as was "done by the election ſtatutes, and the act of "Union?"

I ſhould moreover beg to know whether that Sovereign-Subject the Mob, (on whoſe phyſical conſequence the depoſed Parliament is ordered, as in a ſort

of

of political Saturnalia, to attend,) be by the more every day rules and principles of our government, allowed to legiſlate otherwiſe than by exerciſing the elective franchiſe? and conſequently whether we can limit the conſtitutional authority of Parliament, without abridging the *merely commenſurate* powers of the nation, of which the ſole and *excluſive repoſitory* is Parliament?

The above Queries are all ſo eaſily anſwered, that I am tempted to trouble theſe legal incompetents with a few more; and enquire, with all due deference, whether it makes part of their lately-diſcovered pandects, that the Houſe of Lords ſhould be entirely aboliſhed?—or if not, whether we are to recal our tribunes from Fort George,—to carry up to the Peers, for their concurrence, thoſe plebiſcites, which may paſs by a majority of millions in our new Commons,—our very deliberative, and enlightened multitudinous eſtate?

I might alſo, for the benefit of puzzle-headed incompetents, diſtinguiſh the preſent from a widely diſſimilar queſtion; and obſerve that we are enquiring whether Parliament be the conſtitutional Sovereign; not whether the powers of ſovereignty may be abuſed. Undoubtedly they may: and to a degree ſo flagrant, as to warrant inſurrection. But this holy right (as I think the French have called it) of revolt, I take to be rather an extra-conſtitutional remedy; and I doubt whether any precedents could be found, of a plea of juſtification to an indictment for high treaſon. We are not, on ſuch extreme, and (if I may ſo expreſs it) intentionally unforeſeen occaſions, to be hunting for caſes in point, in the records of our conſtitution; or loſing

the precious moments in argument, or declamation:

——"*non replenda eſt Curia verbis:*
"*Imus in adverſos: quid ceſſas? an tibi Mavors*
"*Ventoſâ in linguâ?*"——

Meantime, while we are perambulating the limits of parliamentary authority, and enquiring whether they be competent to accompliſh any given meaſure, we are bound, as has been well obſerved,‡ to admit the merits and expediency of that meaſure. And indeed this poſtulatum impoſes no mighty hardſhip in the preſent inſtance: ſince we are only required to admit a meaſure to be expedient, which has been recommended by the King,—deemed neceſſary by one Parliament of the Empire,—approved of by our upper Houſe of legiſlature,—its principle conſtructively acquieſced in by the other,—and which is called for by a great proportion of the territory, population, landed and commercial intereſts of Ireland; all deſiring that it may be diſcuſſed, and moſt that it may be carried. And, if any doubt of the public ſentiment ſhould ſtill remain,—it cannot, however, fail of being effectually collected, on the return of thoſe writs which have been lately iſſued,—under the ſignature of two reſpectable Peers, who (by a ſort of topſy-turvy and newly-invented political ſlight of hand,) being transformed into the repre-

‡ By Lord Minto. I cite this very fair and judicious obſervation, becauſe I have no where met with it except in his Lordſhip's ſpeech. In other inſtances, where he has with a cloſe and accidental coincidence, urged the ſame arguments which I had uſed before, I have thought it unneceſſary to quote his Lordſhip's reaſoning; ſince this would have been an indirect way of referring to myſelf.

repreſentatives of eight and thirty members of the other houſe, have annexed to the letter, which they circulate in order to collect the unbiaſſed ſentiments of the people,—a ready-made opinion of their own: a proceeding calculated to relieve the numerous claſs which they addreſs, from a taſk for which they are ſo ill qualified as that of deliberation; and which diſcreetly avoids propoſing queſtions to thoſe, whoſe anſwers would be any thing but *Reſponſa prudentum.*

We are to ſwallow then for a time, (juſt for argument ſake) our indignation at this abominable, parricidal, &c. &c. meaſure,—which Molyneux thought there was no danger would be ever impoſed on Ireland;* and are to enquire whether Parliament be competent to atchieve it, ſuppoſing it were leſs impolitick than it is. We are to put the monſtrous and abſurd hypotheſis, that there might be ſome ſuppoſable circumſtances under which an Union, on ſome ſuppoſable conditions, would be expedient for this country; and are to enquire whether Parliament would, in ſuch a caſe, be competent to procure an acknowledged benefit for the nation. Undoubtedly they would: unleſs to obtain a publick good—be to ſubvert the conſtitution; and, by the mere diffuſion of proſperity, to juſtify revolt.

" As a ſeries of appeals muſt be finite, there ne-
" ceſſarily exiſts in every government, a power, from
" which the conſtitution has provided no appeal;
" and which power, for that reaſon, *may be termed*
" *abſolute, omnipotent, uncontrollable, arbitrary, deſpotic*;

* " This," (ſays Molyneux,) ſpeaking of an incorporate Union between Great Britain and Ireland, " is a happineſs we can " hardly hope for."——State of Ireland, p. 37.

" *tic* ; and is alike ſo in all countries. The perſon, " *or aſſembly, in whom this*" (omnipotent) " *power* " *reſides, is called the ſovereign, or the ſupreme power* " *of the ſtate.*"

" Since to the ſame" (arbitrary) " power univer- " ſally appertains the office of eſtabliſhing public " laws,—*it is called alſo the legiſlature of the ſtate.*"

" A Government receives its denomination from " the form of the" (deſpotic) " legiſlature ; which " form is likewiſe what we commonly mean by the " conſtitution of a country."

" Political writers enumerate three principal forms " of government. Theſe are, firſt abſolute mo- " narchy, *where the*" (omnipotent) " *legiſlature is* " *in a ſingle perſon:* ſecondly ariſtocracy, *where the*" (ſame uncontrollable) " *legiſlature is in a ſelect aſſem-* " *bly*; the members of which ſucceed to their places " in it, in reſpect of ſome perſonal right, or quali- " fication : and thirdly democracy, *where the people* " *at large*, either collectively, or by repreſentation, " *conſtitute the*" (ſtill deſpotic) " *legiſlature.*"

Theſe three, " however, are rather to be under- " ſtood as the ſimple forms, by ſome combination " or intermixture of which, all actual governments " are compoſed, than as any where exiſting in a " pure and elementary ſtate."

Unleſs, (let it be obſerved) the doctrine of parliamentary incompetence be well founded : for if it be, then ſimple uncombined democracy—is the actual eſtabliſhed government of Ireland.

" A mixed government is compoſed, by the com- " bination of two or more of theſe ſimple forms."*

That

* Paley's principles of moral and political philoſophy, book 6th, c. 6th. I have quoted verbatim from this writer, making no change,

That is to ſay, the legiſlative power is not lodged excluſively with a ſingle perſon,—a ſelect aſſembly,—or the people at large, but, (ſtill poſſeſſing its *eſſential* character of omnipotence, unabated,) is diſtributed in portions, amongſt ſome or all of theſe various intereſts in the ſtate.

Thus the merits of the meaſure being admitted,—it being aſſumed to be a good one,—the queſtion is, whether our Parliament be competent to obtain it? or in other words, (if Archdeacon Paley be right,) whether that omnipotent, uncontrollable, deſpotic legiſlature, which conſtitutes the ſovereign power of our ſtate, be poſſeſſed of authority ſufficient to attain the ends for which it was eſtabliſhed,—by procuring the happineſs of its ſubjects;—that primary object of all political inſtitutions? To ſuch a queſtion, I am not afraid to anſwer in the affirmative.

But let us, with reference to the preſent queſtion, proceed to ſee what further has been ſaid by this ſame writer, of the Britiſh Conſtitution: "The Go-"vernment of England," he deſcribes, as "formed "by a combination of the three regular ſpecies; the "monarchy, reſiding in the King; the ariſtocracy "in the Houſe of Lords; *and the republic being re-"preſented by the Houſe of Commons.*" He afterwards proceeds "to enquire in what manner *the "Conſtitution has provided for its own preſervation*; "that is, *in what manner each part of the legiſlature "is ſecured* in the exerciſe of the powers aſſigned to "it, *from the incroachment of the other parts.* This "ſecurity is called *the balance of the Conſtitution*; "and

change, unleſs by the occaſional juxta poſition of ſentences, which are ſeparate in the work.

" and the equilibrium conſiſts in two contrivances,—
" a balance of power; and a balance of intereſt.
" By the former is meant, that *there is no power poſ-*
" *ſeſſed by one part of the legiſlature, whoſe abuſe, or*
" *exceſs, is not checked by ſome antagoniſt power, reſid-*
" *ing in another part.*" With reſpect to " the Houſe
" of Lords, the proper uſe and deſign of this part
" of the Conſtitution, are" (amongſt others) " the
" following. Large bodies of men are ſubject to
" ſudden phrenzies. Opinions may be circulated
" amongſt a multitude, without proof or examina-
" tion; acquiring confidence and reputation merely
" by being repeated from one to another: and paſ-
" ſions founded upon theſe opinions, diffuſing them-
" ſelves with a rapidity that can neither be accounted
" for nor reſiſted, ſometimes agitate a country with
" the moſt violent commotions. Now *the only way*
" *to ſtop the fermentation, is to divide the maſs:* that
" is, to erect different orders in the community, with
" ſeparate intereſts. And this may, occaſionally,
" become the uſe of an hereditary nobility, inveſted
" with a ſhare of legiſlation;—*namely to ſtem the pro-*
" *greſs of popular fury.* Averſe to thoſe prejudices,
" which actuate the minds of the vulgar,—accuſ-
" tomed to contemn the clamour of the populace,—
" they will oppoſe reſolutions, which are founded in
" the folly and violence of the lower part of the
" community. Was the voice of the people always
" dictated by reflection, I ſhould hold the interfe-
" rence of a ſuperior order, not only ſuperfluous,
" but bad. *But when we obſerve what is urged as the*
" *public opinion, to be in truth the opinion only, or per-*

" *haps*

" *haps the feigned profeſſions of a few crafty leaders*; " that the numbers who join in the cry, ſerve only " to ſwell and multiply the ſound, without any ac- " ceſſion of judgment, or exerciſe of underſtanding; " *and that oftentimes the wiſeſt councils have been thus* " *overborne by tumult and uproar*,—we may conceive " occaſions to ariſe, in which the common-wealth " may be ſaved by the reluctance of the nobility to " yield to the vehemence, or adopt the caprices, of " the common people.

" The Conſtitution is one principal diviſion of the " code of public laws; diſtinguiſhed from the reſt, " only by the particular nature, or ſuperior import- " ance of the ſubject of which it treats. Therefore " the terms *conſtitutional* and *unconſtitutional* mean " *legal* and *illegal*. The diſtinction, and the ideas, " which theſe terms denote, are founded on the ſame " authority with the law of the land upon any other " ſubject; and to be aſcertained by the ſame en- " quiries. The ſyſtem of Engliſh juriſprudence is " *made up of acts of Parliament*, deciſions of courts of " law, and immemorial uſages: conſequently *theſe*" (legiſlative acts, &c.) " *are the principles of which* " *the conſtitution itſelf conſiſts*: the ſources, from which " all our knowledge of its nature and limitations is " to be deduced; *and the authorities to which all* " *appeal ought to be made, and by which every conſtitu-* " *tional doubt and queſtion can alone be decided*. This " plain and intelligible definition is the more neceſ- " ſary to be preſerved in our thoughts,—as ſome " writers upon the ſubject *abſurdly confound what is*

" *conſtitu-*

"*conſtitutional with what is expedient: pronouncing* "*forthwith a meaſure to be unconſtitutional, which* "*they adjudge in any reſpect to be detrimental. An* "*act of Parliament, in England, can never be un-*" *conſtitutional, in the ſtrict and proper acceptation of the* "*term.*"*

I ſhall make no apology for the length of an extract, which contains ſo many juſt and applicable reflections, and which is highly pertinent to my general ſubject; beſides ſuggeſting the following obſervations, more peculiarly belonging to the topick which we are upon.

Firſt, if the government, under the theory of which we live, be Britiſh,—and if we be to look to acts of Parliament for the principles of our conſtitution, making them the authorities to which in doubtful caſes we ſhould appeal,—and if no ſtatute can, properly ſpeaking, be unconſtitutional,—then the queſtion of parliamentary competence has been repeatedly decided, by various acts which have paſſed: acts operating as material, (though not ſimilar) changes on the conſtitution, as thoſe projects of reform would have produced, which you ſupported, without expreſſing any doubt that Parliament was perfectly competent to adopt them: and laſtly, the Scotch Union ſupplies us with a determination ſo accurately in point,—that the Anti-Unioniſts ſhould now follow the advice of Mr. Paley.

They ſhould oppoſe the meaſure to which they are ſo hoſtile, on the mere ground of its impolicy; and abandon

* Ibid. c. 7.

abandon their objections to it as unconſtitutional; leaving his Majeſty in quiet poſſeſſion of his crown, and renouncing that vile doctrine of Parliamentary incompetence, which robs the peers of their ſhare of legiſlation, and appeals from the deliberations of the legiſlature, to the opinion of a few crafty demagogues, echoed by an ignorant and tumultuous populace. Indeed thus to retract is the more incumbent on them, becauſe ſtrange as it may ſeem, it is very certain, that while they are reſiſting thoſe legitimate prerogatives of the legiſlature, the exercife of which may bring about an Union, they are at the ſame time (in order to defeat this uſeful meaſure) attempting to puſh the authority of Parliament beyond the only limit, which has been ſet to it by the conſtitution. A legiſlature may do every thing but encroach on the omnipotence of that which is to ſucceed it: but in ſetting up the acts of the Iriſh Parliament in 1782, to controul the powers of that which is now aſſembled, they make this vain and unconſtitutional attempt; acting in the very teeth of my Lord Coke's poſition, that "though Parliaments have attempted to reſtrain ſub-"ſequent Parliaments, yet they never could effect "it;" for "acts againſt the power of the Parlia-"ment ſubſequent, bind not."*

I have now done with this ſubject, I truſt for ever; and probably ſhould not have ſaid ſo much upon it, if it were not for my hearing, what it is very difficult to believe,—that an eminent Member of that profeſſion to which I belong, (and which is ſuppoſed

* 4th Inſtitute 43.

to imply ſome knowledge of the law of the land,) intends, by ſupporting an opinion which not only contradicts the maxims of our conſtitution, but is repugnant to the firſt and eſſential principles of all government, to run a riſk which would not be ventured by a man of leſs reputation; and evince ſatisfactorily to the publick, that his diſpoſitions are enterpriſing, and that his character is well eſtabliſhed.

I ſhall now Sir proceed to other topicks; and though I may occaſionally allude to your printed ſpeech, ſhall henceforth rather conſider the queſtion which you have treated, than inveſtigate the arguments which you have uſed.

The queſtion is whether a legiſlative Union of theſe iſlands, on juſt and liberal terms, would be compatible with the freedom, and conducive to the proſperity of this country. Whether ſuch an incorporation would not, under any circumſtances, and upon permanent and unalterable principles, be deſirable; and whether, from our late calamities, and preſent proſpects, that is not become neceſſary, which muſt at all times be expedient. This queſtion I anſwer, on my conſcience, in the affirmative; and towards proving my opinion, the only *datum* which I require is this, that the connexion between the countries is requiſite for the welfare and ſecurity of both.

Sir I ſhall not condeſcend to notice that vain ſophiſm, as miſchievous in its object, as weak in its effect, which inſulting the principles, and good ſenſe of thoſe upright men who ſupport Union, untruly ſtates the queſtion to be this, whether we ſhould give the preference to liberty or connexion; and whether it be of the eſſence of this latter that Ireland

ſhould

ſhould not be free. I am grieved to find ſo paltry an aſſertion intruding itſelf into the arguments of a man whoſe talents I have too much diſcernment not to admire, and whoſe character I know too intimately not to love. I am grieved to find *him* * ſo blinded and miſled by party, as not to ſee that it is impoſſible for this to be the queſtion; conſidering the part which has been taken by thoſe, of whoſe integrity he cannot—I will repeat it—*cannot* doubt: I grieve to find him hurried away by a generous prejudice ſo far—as to overlook a truth, which in calmer moments his good ſenſe muſt recogniſe; viz. that there is an independence proper to Union, as well as to diſtinctneſs; and that every portion of a ſtate is free, where each part is independent of every other; though all the parts depend upon the whole.

No man of common ſenſe will (with the expectation of being believed) deny either one or other of the following poſitions; *firſt*, that ſince theſe iſlands are members (even by anti union hypotheſis) of one empire, it would reconcile the practice with the theory, and contribute to imperial ſolidity, that they ſhould be governed by one legiſlature; or in other words that the ſtate ſhould be under the dominion of one Sovereign. *Secondly*, that if inſtead of altering an old fabrick, we had to erect a new, we could not, without the moſt manifeſt deſertion of ordinary and eſtabliſhed rules, aſſign to Ireland a proportion of repreſentatives in the common Parliament, equal to the number of thoſe returned by a member of the empire exceeding this in population, reſources, and extent;

* See Mr. Buſhe's printed ſpeech.

extent; and we ſhould deſpiſe the blundering pertneſs which, in pronouncing that Ireland was enſlaved, by returning fewer repreſentatives than were ſent by the greater limb of the empire, would in fact imply that Iriſh freedom could by no means be ſecured, unleſs by repealing that very antient law of Nature, which has enacted that a part ſhall not be equal to the whole.

Is Ireland content to be a part of the empire? The Anti-Unioniſts anſwer *yes*;—but their reaſoning whiſpers *no*.

If ſhe be, let her ſubmit to thoſe conſequences which muſt, by the immutable laws of nature, ariſe from the fractional ſituation that ſhe has choſen. She muſt remove the cauſe, if ſhe would get rid of the effect. The being connected is the cauſe; and its removal will be ſeparation.

I am tempted to illuſtrate this part of the inquiry, in a way which if my readers ſhould think unſuitable to the gravity of the ſubject we are diſcuſſing, I might juſtify, by obſerving that it is difficult to give a ſerious anſwer to a ſilly argument.

Let us ſuppoſe that Cornwall, profeſſing to be an integral part of the Britiſh empire, ſhould however have a diſtinct Parliament of her own, which it was propoſed to incorporate with the principal legiſlature of Britain. We agree, ſay the Corniſh men, to the principle of incorporation: it remains to know what are to be the terms: how many members ſhall this diſtrict ſend to the united Parliament? a number, replies the miniſter, proportioned to its reſources, and

ſituation:

ſituation: for example, forty-four commoners. Inſtantly the patriotiſm of Cornwall is up in arms. Forty-four members to the Houſe of Commons! this will be a mere merger of the Corniſh Parliament! an abſolute extinction of our independence! Shall we thus ſurrender our conſtitution? Cornwall, the country of the long-loſt Arthur! Cornwall, the primary ſeat of civility in Britain; whoſe tin-mines were worked, Lord knows how many centuries ago, by the Phenicians!

It cannot be doubted that ſuch ſtrong reaſoning would make a due impreſſion, and prevail upon the Britiſh adminiſtration to allow that Cornwall ſhould return five hundred and fourteen members to the Imperial Houſe of Commons, (this being the ſum of Britiſh repreſentation:) that ſhe ſhould alſo thruſt every peer ſhe could lay her hands on into the Houſe of Lords; and that from the day of Union no title of nobility, appendant to any other diſtrict, ſhould be conferred, without at the ſame time creating a peer, who ſhould take his title from ſome territory in Cornwall.

Matters thus arranged, and the united Commons, to the number of above a thouſand being aſſembled, they are alarmed to receive a petition from Derbyſhire, inſiſting upon the loyalty and antiquity of that diſtrict,—as long above water, and as well ſtored with foſſils, as any other part of England,—praying the benefit of the Corniſh principle,—and that the number of its members ſhould be encreaſed from four to a thouſand and twenty-four, ſo as to balance the reſidue

ſidue of Britiſh repreſentation, and ſecure the endangered liberties of Derby.

Under theſe circumſtances I can conceive an enlightened ſtateſmen to get up, and warn Parliament how they proceeded farther on a principle, which led to greater embarraſſments than perhaps were foreſeen. That every county might come forward in ſucceſſion, and claim the operation of this rule, with as much ground as could be alleged on behalf of Derbyſhire or Cornwall: That mean time the repreſentative body would encreaſe, like the price of the horſe which was ſold at the rate of a penny for the firſt nail in his ſhoes, and of making the price of each ſucceeding nail double that of the one before; till at length there could be no more repreſentatives, for want of more conſtituents; and the population of Britain would not ſuffice for the ſupply of her enormous parliamentary reſervoir.

Thoſe who can deride this principle, in the imaginary caſe of Cornwall, might do well to conſider whether it be not the very ſame which they are ſetting up ſo loudly on behalf of Ireland: whether thoſe who object to Union, becauſe our repreſentatives will be leſs numerous than thoſe of Britain, are doing more than imitating the Corniſh claims; and whether their objections can grow leſs abſurd, unleſs it be by becoming more miſchievous; and demonſtrating the expediency of ſeparation.

I, for my part, am a ſincere friend to the connexion: I have ever been ſo. But I would ſuit my practice with my principles; and not rant

about

about my regard for that, which my conduct manifeſtly tended to diſſolve. On theſe grounds it is that, for now a ſeries of years, and uniformly ſince I have ſat in Parliament, I have ſupported every important meaſure of Government, except the Rejection of the Roman Catholic Claims. I have done ſo, not only without being connected with Adminiſtration, but without ſeeking or poſſeſſing that intercourſe with them, which uſually ſubſiſts between Government and even the humbleſt of its Supporters. Scorning to refute the miſrepreſentation of thoſe, who deſcribed me as a member of oppoſition, (and who have betrayed me into this ſhort egotiſm, by preſuming lately to ſpeak of me as a man who had changed my principles,) I contented myſelf with reſiſting Parliamentary Reform: with ſupporting the Inſurrection Bill, and oppoſing its Repeal: with concurring to ſuſpend the Habeas Corpus Act: with indemnifying thoſe who had tranſgreſſed the Law to ſave the Conſtitution: with viſiting the crimes of the Traitor on his deſcendants: with ſtrengthening the hands of Government to an unprecedented degree: with not deſerting my poſt in Parliament to the laſt. In ſhort, I fought for the connexion, and was not unwilling to let others receive the pay.

But I never ceaſed to deplore the neceſſity of that rigour, which I ſupported; and I now act not only conſiſtently, but (if I may ſo expreſs it) conſequentially, in being the advocate of a ſyſtem which

which will keep the empire entire, compatibly with thoſe free principles, that we have hitherto been obliged to ſacrifice very largely to its preſervation; a ſyſtem which will truſt the ſecurity of Britiſh connexion, not to penal ſtatutes, or military control; but to the milder yet more effectual influence, and widely diffuſed bleſſings of the Britiſh conſtitution.

I do not know whether what I aſk pardon for having taken the liberty of ſaying about myſelf, goes to prove that I have thoſe claims to credit and attention, which conſiſtency and independence may give to an humble man; but it will at leaſt ſuggeſt a reply to thoſe, who in fact do not deſerve an anſwer, when they aſk whether this be a moment to propoſe Union? Now, when the country, languid and exhauſted, is yet panting from her efforts in the late rebellion! This is not only wretched argument: it is miſerable declamation: It amounts in fact to this monſtrous poſition, that it is not when a knot is looſened we ſhould make it faſt: that having traced to its ſource a danger from which we have narrowly eſcaped, and which, as long as that ſource is open, will be likely to recur, we ſhould not be in any hurry to remove the cauſe which we have thus detected; although the next effect which it produces, may be mortal. Such reaſoning proves nothing, or it demonſtrates this,—that a proſperous ſituation it may be expedient to change; but that it would be highly imprudent to modify a ſyſtem, of which the natural produce ſeems calamity and diſcord.

But

But indeed the Anti-Unioniſts take ſuch various grounds, that it would be difficult to encounter them with effect, if it were not that this diſſenſion ſupplies a general argument againſt them all. One admits that the meaſure which he reſiſts might be very expedient under certain imaginary circumſtances; to wit, thoſe in which according to another Anti-Unioniſt we now ſtand. Thus, fortunately for their antagoniſts, the Anti-Union batteries are ſo diſpoſed, that they fire upon each other, and do great execution. The Speaker for example, Sir, does not agree in your picture of this country, as reduced by a train of calamitous meaſures, to religious diviſions, and the condition of a conqueſt."* He of courſe cannot deſcribe this as the tendency of meaſures, which originated from a cabinet of which he made one. No: that ſagacious ſtateſman deriding the puny efforts of ſeparation, and penetrating thoſe ſcenes of blood and havock which obſtruct the views of ſuch inferior politicians as myſelf, ſees nothing round him, but proſperity and peace: the moſt ſolid bleſſings in our actual poſſeſſion, and the faireſt proſpects for times to come! Indeed ſo happy are we, that as he has expreſſed it in a homely way, we ſhould aſk nothing of England, but that ſhe would let us alone.† What is ſo apparent to that gentleman, I freely confeſs myſelf unable to diſcern; but I much prefer his inference to yours;

* Mr. Grattan's ſpeech.

† If my memory does not deceive me, theſe or ſimilar expreſſions occur in the Speaker's ſpeech.

and ſhould rather decline tampering with a proſperous condition, than with one which I had deſcribed as wretched in the extreme.

I ſupport Union—from my regard to the connexion; which in my opinion can no otherwiſe be ſecured. If I were a dabbler in reform, and received propoſals for conſtitutions, as ſome do, I ſhould ſay Britiſh connexion is my fundamental principle: deſign me a plan as excellent as you can in other reſpects; but above all let your eſtabliſhment be one which I can erect on this foundation. If any wiſe man ſhould ſet to work in 1800 with theſe directions, the plan which he muſt preſent, would be a legiſlative Union.

If it be aſked in what conſiſts the good which Union will accompliſh? I point, with Mr. Pitt, to the evils which it will prevent: to the ſecurity which it will (including Ireland) give the empire. The grand benefit which will reſult from the meaſure to this kingdom, (that benefit from which, as from a ſource, the reſt muſt flow) will be the ſtrengthening the connexion, ſo as that it cannot be diſſolved.

How will Union protect us from invaſion? by deſtroying that hope of ſeparating this country from Great Britain, which at preſent is our enemy's great inducement to invade us.

How will it promote the wealth and commercial greatneſs of this country? by removing that mound which has hitherto confined the redundant capital of England, and prevented it from flowing for the benefit of the Iriſh nation.

Amid

Amid diſturbance from within, and invaſion from without,—thoſe neceſſary conſequences of our preſent precarious connexion, and of the attempts of enemies and traitors to avail themſelves of its weakneſs, and effect a ſeparation,—it cannot be wondered at, if no Engliſhman would chuſe to truſt himſelf or his capital to a country, where neither life nor property are ſecure. But take away thoſe impediments,—and what will remain, to countervail the inducements, which its natural ſituation holds out to the trader to eſtabliſh himſelf in Ireland? Mr. Foſter, a great authority on ſuch ſubjects, admits that this country is ſituated extremely well for commerce; and that "England finds a full call for all ſhe makes: every "year affording an encreaſing demand." Here then is an inducement to veſt more capital in buſineſs; while Ireland, reinſtated in thoſe advantages which nature gave, (but which an ill-conſtructed eſtabliſhment took away), tempts the adventurer to make choice of it, for the ſcene of his trade. Add to which, the ſecurity that Union gives the empire, will neceſſarily augment the proſperity, and commercial enterpriſe of Britain; and be of ſervice to this country in two ways: by rendering England too contracted a ſphere for its enormous capital to move in; and by urging the capitaliſt to avail himſelf of the peculiar local advantages of Ireland, and make it the theatre of his commercial exertions. *Ceteris paribus*, it is plain that the trader will ſettle in that place, which is beſt calculated for the purpoſes of his

* Speaker's Speech, p. 70.

his commerce; and that when our tranquillity ſhall have been permanently reſtored, this principle muſt operate beneficially for Ireland, is a propoſition which it would be ſuperfluous to prove. Yet with what flimſy objections has this plain reaſoning been encountered? I will prove to you, ſays Mr. Foſter, (too able a man not to eſtimate truly the argument which he uſed,) that you muſt not hope to ſee the woollen, the cotton, the pottery, or iron manufactures ſettled amongſt you. It is true that this very reſpectable perſon failed altogether in the proof of his aſſertion; and was refuted not only by others, but by himſelf: ſince his poſitions not only ſhew that the cheapneſs of labour and proviſions in this country might more than counterbalance the other diſadvantages on which he relies; but after urging the want of fuel as the obſtacle to our hopes, he admits that we ſhould find abundance of coal in Ireland, if we had but capital enough to ſearch. But it has always ſtruck me that the caſe would not have been altered, though he had ſucceeded in his demonſtration. The queſtion was whether we ſhould have the capital; not how that capital would be employed: whether, in general, we ſhould have trade; not what particular branches of it might flouriſh here. The argument reſembled his, who ſhould deny that when the dam was removed, the ſtream that had been impriſoned would iſſue forth; and ſhould attempt to prove his denial, by raiſing doubts as to the channels in which the water, when it was releaſed, would run.

Union, you ſay, will take away a great portion of our landed capital, and you tremble for the effect which

which this removal muſt have upon the agriculture of Ireland. It muſt indeed be admitted, that from your own account our tillage is in ſo languiſhing a condition, that we have none to ſpare; and in being deprived of it, ſhould loſe what was poſſeſſed of every value that rarity can give. Where "the tenantry "had not capital; and great tracts of land remained "either totally neglected, or ſuperficially improv-"ed,"* the country had little to boaſt of on the ſcore of cultivation.

—Att amen illud
Perdidit infelix totum nihil:

Such as it was, Union has deſtroyed it all. Theſe deſtructive tendencies of Union I am unable to diſcern. For not to mention that the fortune which is amaſs'd in trade is generally veſted at laſt in the purchaſe of land, ſo that the communication of a commercial will ultimately give a landed capital,—it ſeems mean time no hazardous conjecture, that the encreaſe of wealth, induſtry, and population, muſt contribute materially to promoting tillage. "The effect "of trade upon agriculture," (ſays an ingenious writer,) "is viſible in the neighbourhood of trading "towns; and in thoſe diſtricts which carry on a com-"munication with the markets of trading towns. "The huſbandmen are buſy and ſkilful; the pea-"ſantry laborious: the lands are managed to the "beſt advantage, and double the quantity of "corn or herbage raiſed from it, of what the "ſame ſoil yields in remoter, and more neglected "parts

* Mr. Grattan's words.

" parts of the country. Wherever a thriving manu-
" factory finds means to eſtabliſh itſelf, a new ve-
" getation ſprings up around it. I believe it is true
" that agriculture never arrives at any conſiderable,
" much leſs at its higheſt degree of perfection, where
" it is not connected with trade; that is, where the
" demand for the produce is not encreaſed by the
" conſumption of trading towns."

I do not know why I ſhould quote Paley in ſupport of a truth, ſo obvious that I might have ventured to ſtate it on my own authority, viz. that corn, like any other article of conſumption, will be produced in proportion to the demand which there is for it: and this being the caſe, I cannot ſhare your apprehenſions that Union, in introducing commercial capital amongſt us, will fail to promote the agriculture of Ireland.

But will the effect of Union be to encreaſe our abſentees? I ſincerely believe not in the degree that ſome pretend to fear; and others perhaps really apprehend. I will not ſay whether the caſe would be altered by a Union, but at leaſt there ſeems to be nothing in our preſent diſtinctneſs, which induces landed proprietors to reſide: and I have ſomewhere ſeen it ſtated that nearly a million of Iriſh rents went annually from hence, before the number of our abſentees was ſo greatly augmented, as it has been ſince thoſe late diſturbances took place, which were attributable to cauſes, that Union would remove. Therefore you do not put the matter fairly when you ſay that the miniſter " finds one great abſentee
" draught; and gives us another." One drain, the meaſure which he propoſes would cloſe up;

and

and thoſe whom tumult baniſhed, tranquillity would recall. Whether the kingdoms be united, or be not, London muſt be the reſidence of the monarch, and the metropolis of the empire; and as ſuch attract the great and the ambitious, from whatever quarter of the Britiſh dominions. But Union, ſo far from encreaſing, will rather in ſome degree counteract thoſe attractions. I do not mean merely by rendering property ſecure; and giving Ireland that quiet and proſperity, to which ſhe has ſo long been a ſtranger: thus tempting the moderately wealthy to fix their reſidence in a thriving and tranquil country, where taxes do not deduct ſo largely from income as in England: I mean by the reward of reſidence which Union will propoſe,—viz. a ſeat in the imperial legiſlature;—no trivial object of fair ambition to the proudeſt. Neither will that advantage, which has been noticed by Mr. Pitt, be overlooked by the *real* friends to the connexion; namely, that this transfer of the legiſlature would diſſeminate thoſe Engliſh feelings, which are quite compatible with the moſt genuine and patriotick love for Ireland.

I am well aware how much men's principles are ſtrengthened by their habits; and I have very little doubt, (if it be not preſumptuous to draw an illuſtration from the petty and obſcure circle of my own experience,) that having been educated in England, and paſſed the earlier years of my life in that country, contributed more effectually than any reflection could have done—to put my ſentiments and principles in uniſon with each other; and make me conſider all my fellow ſubjects in the

the light of Countrymen; on which ever ſide of the Channel they might happen to have been born.

But neither is it to be forgotten, that though Union ſhould turn ſome of our preſent Reſidents to Abſentees,—this effect would be more than counterbalanced by the many beneficial conſequences which it would produce: by the reſtoration of that good order, for the want of which, there is nothing can compenſate; the ſecurity of that connexion, which is eſſential to our welfare; the conſequent introduction of induſtry and wealth,—and the comfort and improvement of our ſordid and degraded people; the formation of a claſs which this country greatly wants, for the purpoſe (amongſt others,) which I have mentioned laſt;—a deſcription of men that would ſtop the breaches in our ſociety, and fill up that interval between rich and poor, which forms a gulph that had nearly ſwallowed up the Conſtitution;—and laſtly, by the advantage which we might reaſonably hope to receive, from having the imperial councils at all times influenced, perhaps ſometimes guided, by ſome of thoſe Peers or Commoners whom Ireland had returned; men attached to, and acquainted with the intereſts of their native country. Theſe, Sir, are the bribes which the Miniſter holds out. I plead guilty in his name, to the charge which you have brought againſt him: The bribes which he offers are irreſiſtibly attractive; no leſs than freedom, proſperity, and peace,—to coerced, impoveriſhed, and diſtracted Ireland.

Proteſting

Proteſting againſt the juſtice or propriety of eſtimating the advantages of Union by its probable effects on the metropolis, excluſively,—I muſt however refuſe my aſſent to the opinion that even to Dublin it will be at all permanently injurious. Let us balance the account fairly. This city is now the capital of a poor, and idle, and diſtracted kingdom; but it is the ſeat of the Iriſh legiſlature. After Union the ſeat of legiſlature will be transferred to England; and the arrangement which involves this transfer, will render Dublin the metropolis of a wealthy, flouriſhing, and peaceful country. I ſee nothing for my fellow citizens to tremble at, in ſuch a change. I preſume it cannot be denied either that the proſperity of a capital ſhould be in proportion to that of the ſtate; or that it will even ſhare principally and pre-eminently in the general welfare; and that the national circulation will be ſtrongeſt about the heart. But to this I muſt add another conſideration, viz. that the grandeur of Dublin would, after Union, be derived from that of Ireland. Being the focus in which the national rays were collected, its ſplendour would be proportioned to their number and brightneſs; and as the city would be intereſted in the general welfare of the land, this latter would have the advantages which it poured in, reflected back, and would riſe and flouriſh connectedly with its metropolis. But what is the ſituation of Dublin now? its grandeur is not only inſulated, and unconnected with that of the country to which it claims to belong, but it is even, in ſome degree, built upon the degradation and impoveriſhment of the ſtate. Let Ireland periſh—provided Dublin reap the

annual profits of a Parliamentary Seſſion!—Is this the ſentiment of a citizen of Dublin? and ſhall we cheriſh a diſtinctneſs which makes the kingdom little,—becauſe ſhort-ſighted perſons fancy it makes the city great?

But Union will hurt Dublin, by aggrandizing Cork! On the contrary, if the principle which I have laid down be as incontrovertible as I ſuppoſe, the metropolis muſt be ſerved by the aggrandizement of the kingdom in all its parts; and will conſequently be enriched by the proſperity of that part of Ireland which we call Cork. There is indeed another mode of putting this objection; but which is founded on a jealouſy too paltry to deſerve an anſwer: True! after Union, Dublin may be great; but ſo, alas! will Cork. This illiberal complaint places the citizens of Dublin exactly in the light of the labourer mentioned in Scripture; who could not object to the hire which he received himſelf, as too low a price for the work that he had done; but was mortified to find another who had done leſs, receive the ſame. The only difference between the caſes is, that the man in the parable derived no benefit from the profits of his companion; whereas Dublin muſt gain advantage from the aggrandizement of Cork.

But let us hear what Adam Smith has ſaid upon this ſubject. It may be worthy the attention of the inhabitants of Dublin.

"The whole annual produce of the land and la-
" bour of every country, when it comes either from
" the ground, or from the hands of the productive
" labourers, naturally divides itſelf into two parts;
" one of which is deſtined for replacing a *capital*,

" and

" and the other for conſtituting a *revenue*. That " part which replaces capital, pays the wages of pro- " ductive labour only: it never is immediately em- " ployed in maintaining any but productive hands. " Unproductive labourers, and thoſe who do not la- " bour at all, are all maintained by revenue. The " owners of this revenue might maintain indifferently " either productive or unproductive hands; but they " ſeem to have ſome predilection for the latter. The " expence of a great lord feeds generally more idle " than induſtrious people: the capital of a rich mer- " chant maintains induſtrious people only. The " proportion therefore between the productive and " unproductive hands, depends very much, in every " country, upon the proportion between that part of " the annual produce which is deſtined for replacing " a capital, and that which is deſtined for conſtitut- " ing a revenue. This proportion is very different " in rich, from what it is in poor countries. Thus at " preſent, in the opulent countries of Europe, a very " large, frequently the largeſt, portion of the produce " of the land is deſtined for replacing the capital of " the rich and independent farmer;" a being ſo little known in Ireland, that our idea of a yeoman is connected, not with the plough-ſhare, but with the ſword; " but, antiently, a very ſmall portion of " the produce was ſufficient to replace the capital " employed in cultivation." This ſmall portion too, together with " all the reſt of the produce, belonged " to the landlord;" and conſtituted his revenue; either in the form of " rent for his land, or profit upon" that " paltry capital, which was by him advanced to

" the

" the occupiers of the ſoil. Theſe were generally " bondmen, or tenants at will;" who " though " they lived at a diſtance from his houſe, were " equally dependant upon him, as his retainers, " who lived in it." In ſhort the tenantry of thoſe days, in conſequence of the dearth of capital, formed a claſs not very diſſimilar to that of Iriſh cottiers.

" At preſent," too, " in the wealthy countries of " Europe, great capitals are employed in trade and " manufactures. In the ancient ſtate, the little trade " that was ſtirring, and the few coarſe and homely " manufactures that were carried on, required but " very ſmall capitals."

" That part of the annual produce, therefore, " which, as it comes from the ground, or from the " hands of the productive labourers, is deſtined for " replacing a capital, is not only much greater in " rich than in poor countries, but bears a much " greater proportion to that which is deſtined for con- " ſtituting a revenue, either as profit, or as rent."— In other words, the funds (viz. that capital which Dublin wants) deſtined for the maintenance of productive labour, are not only much greater in opulent countries than in poor ones, but bear a much greater proportion to thoſe funds, (compoſed of that revenue, which is now expended in this metropolis,) " which, though they may be applied to maintain " either productive or unproductive hands, are ge- " nerally employed not in feeding the induſtrious, " but in pampering the idle.

" The proportion between theſe different funds " neceſſarily determines, in every country, the ge- " neral

" neral character of the inhabitants, as to induſtry " or idleneſs. We are more induſtrious than our " forefathers, becauſe, in the preſent times, the " funds deſtined for the maintenance of induſtry, " are much greater in proportion to thoſe, which " are likely to be employed in the maintenance of " idleneſs, than they were two or three centuries " ago. Our anceſtors were idle, for want of a " ſufficient encouragement to induſtry.

" The annual produce of the land and labour " of any Nation can be increaſed in its value by " no other means, but by increaſing either the num- " ber of its productive labourers, or the productive " powers of thoſe who had before been employed. " In either caſe, an additional capital is required. " When we compare therefore the ſtate of a Nation " at two different periods, and find that the annual " produce of its land and labour is evidently " greater at the latter, than at the former,—that " its lands are better cultivated, its manufactures " more numerous and more flouriſhing, and its " trade more extenſive,—we may be aſſured that " its capital muſt have increaſed, during the interval " between thoſe two periods." *

But

* Inquiry into the Nature and Cauſes of the Wealth of Nations, —book 2d. ch. 3d.——I have in the above extract taken the ſame liberty, which I did in quoting from Archdeacon Paley,— and with a view to omitting every thing that was not directly relevant to my ſubject, have united paragraphs, which are ſeparate in the work. I have, alſo for the purpoſe of rendering the reaſoning more conſecutive, changed the turn of expreſſion in one or two

But I ſhould apologize to thoſe ſound Logicians, who ſuſtain the Anti-Union cauſe, for having preſumed to quote a writer of the Analytic claſs.

Having objected to Union *in the abſtract*, thoſe grave and conſiſtent perſonages complain that we have accepted the aid of *abſtract reaſoning*, to confute them. They are indignant that we ſhould argue a principle which they refuſe to concede: calling upon us to treat the queſtion in the concrete; and with reference to thoſe terms, which yet, they refuſe to hear propounded.

If this objection came from thoſe puzzled intellects, whoſe only talent is that of rendering confuſion worſe confounded,—and who miſtake every thing that is comprehenſive, or even rational, for metaphyſicks,—men who would conſider the analyſis of a loaf into its ingredients, as the mere ſport of ſubtilty and metaphyſical refinement,—and overlook the uſeful inference to which this abſtract reaſoning might lead, viz. that it would be vain to build the oven, unleſs you ſowed the corn;—I ſay, I ſhould not be ſurpriſed, if the clumſy objection came from ſuch a quarter. But if a man of undoubted talents undertake to diſpatch the ſolid arguments which have been uſed againſt him,——with a curſory parentheſis, of "*ſo ſay the Metaphyſicians*,"———

I will

two inſtances; but the alteration has been ſo ſlight, as to be ſcarcely worth taking this notice of. Neither is my extract in any reſpect a garbled one: the paſſages which I have omitted, ſo far from contradicting, do not even qualify the poſitions which I have cited.——The Reference that I have given my readers, will enable them to turn to the book itſelf, and aſcertain the truth of what I have ſaid.

I will complain of his treating that reaſoning with ſarcaſm, which he has not anſwered; and which has been relied on by his friend. When diſputing the analogies on which I had inſiſted, he informs me that "*in Wales, or Yorkſhire, there are* "*no diſtinct executives; but that nature has determined* "*theſe two countries not to be ſufficiently proximate for* "*a common executive,*"*—I ſhall not meddle with his inference, but diſpute his aſſertion; and oppoſe him, not with an argument, but with a law: a law ſo fundamental, as the act of annexation. He will there learn that theſe countries *are* ſufficiently proximate for a common executive: and if he purſues the enquiry, and examines our modification of the law of Poynings, he will find that our patriotic legiſlature of 1782, thought them ſufficiently proximate for the admiſſion of a principle, which ſubjects the acts of the Iriſh executive, and royal eſtate, through the medium of its miniſters, to the control of a Britiſh Parliament. If he calls on me to "figure to myſelf an Iriſh executive government, "with its reſponſibility as diſtant as Weſtminſter," I will tell him that this is not mere hypotheſis; but is *very nearly* matter of fact; and that he is not painting what after Union the ſituation of things would be; but what in *a great degree* it is at preſent. I will ſuggeſt to him that the reſponſibility of a Britiſh Miniſter, to a Parliament containing a hundred repreſentatives from this country, muſt afford a better protection to the intereſts of Ireland,

—than

* Mr. Buſhe's printed Speech.

—than can ariſe from his being anſwerable for his meaſures to a legiſlature, in which no member returned by Iriſh conſtituents is included. But I will not proceed further.—I will not uſe the privilege which perhaps he has given me,—by deſcribing the meaſure which I ſupport, as a total and vile ſurrender of the liberties of Ireland; and the arguments which I uſed, as mere flimſy textures of metaphyſical fineſſe, beneath which I vainly ſought to hide thoſe chains, with which I was baſely conſpiring to load my country. I will not enquire whether, if the King's being "obliged to act here by viceregal de-"putation" prove any thing,—it does not demonſtrate this,—that the laws of nature are at variance with the act of annexation? or whether the principles on which my valuable,—but on this occaſion, I think, prejudiced—friend has reſted our claims to an independent Parliament, would not alike entitle us to what we have not,—an independent crown?*—But I will aſk whether if "England has for centuries "uniformly plundered and oppreſſed us,—if the "Britiſh nation has for ages ſhackled, paralized, "deſpiſed, and kept our country down,"—it be not incumbent on every Iriſhman who loves his native land, to rid us of a yoke ſo galling and diſgraceful,—and, inſtead of looking "on Britiſh connexion as a "polar principle in politicks,"—to withdraw from the blaſting influence which has withered our proſperity, and break for ever with this rapacious and treacherous

* In the preamble of Stat. 4th Wm. and Mary, c. 1. ſ. 1. the kingdom of Ireland is declared to be rightfully *depending upon* the imperial crown of England.

treacherous ally? I will aſk this,—becauſe it is my duty to warn a friend whom I ſincerely regard, of the danger which he is in: to ſhew him that the arguments which he has inadvertently adopted, can no otherwiſe diſſuade from Union, than by recommending ſeparation; and thus to ſtop him, even roughly, at the brink of a precipice,—to which nothing but a generous prejudice could have led him; and from which, when he ſees the gulph, his loyalty will recoil.

But having got through what I ſuppoſe will be called Adam Smith's Metaphyſicks, let us liſten to his facts. "In mercantile, and manufacturing "towns, where the inferior ranks of people are "chiefly maintained by the employment of capital, "they are in general induſtrious, ſober, and thriv-"ing; as in many Engliſh, and in moſt Dutch "towns. In thoſe towns which are principally ſup-"ported by the conſtant, or occaſional reſidence of "a court, and in which the inferior ranks of people "are chiefly maintained by the ſpending of reve-"nue," (as is the caſe of Dublin) "they are in ge-"neral idle, diſſolute, and poor; as at Rome, Ver-"ſailles, Compiegni, and Fontainbleau. There is "little trade or induſtry in any of the Parliament "towns of France; and the inferior ranks of peo-"ple being chiefly maintained by the expence of the "members of the courts of juſtice, and of thoſe "who come to plead before them, are in general "idle and poor. In theſe towns, very little more "capital ſeems to be employed, than what is ne-"ceſſary for ſupplying their own conſumption; that

" is, little more than the ſmalleſt capital, which can " be employed in them. The ſame thing may be " ſaid of Paris, Madrid, and Vienna. Of theſe " three cities, Paris is the moſt induſtrious; but " Paris is itſelf the principal market of all the manu- " factures eſtabliſhed there; and its own conſump- " tion is the chief object of all the trade which it " carries on. London, Liſbon, and Copenhagen " are, perhaps, the only three cities in Europe, which " are both the conſtant reſidence of a court, and " can at the ſame time be conſidered as trading ci- " ties, or as cities which trade not only for their own " conſumption, but for that of other cities and " countries;" and the reaſon for this phenomenon ſeems to be, that " the ſituation of all three is ex- " tremely advantageous; and naturally fits them to " be the entrepots of a great part of the goods, deſ- " tined for the conſumption of diſtant places." In a word, the many other favourable circumſtances attending their ſituation, have more than made amends for this drawback; and thus they have become exceptions to a general rule, and been enabled upon the whole to ſurmount that obſtacle to their commercial greatneſs, which was occaſioned by the conſtant reſidence of a Court.

But ſuch rare examples do not render it leſs true, as a general poſition, that " in a city where a great " revenue is ſpent,—to employ with advantage a ca- " pital for any other purpoſe, than merely for ſup- " plying the conſumption of that city, is probably " more difficult, than in one in which the inferior " ranks of people have no other maintenance, but

" what

" what they derive from the employment of ſuch a " capital. The idleneſs of the greater part of the " people who are maintained by the expence of re- " venue, corrupts, it is probable, the induſtry of " thoſe who ought to be maintained by the employ- " ment of capital; and renders it leſs advantageous " to employ a capital there, than in other places. " There was little trade or induſtry in Edinburgh, " before the Union. When the Scotch Parliament " was no longer to be aſſembled in it, when it ceaſed " to be the neceſſary reſidence of the principal nobi- " lity, and gentry of Scotland, it became a city of " ſome trade, and induſtry. It ſtill, however, con- " tinues to be the reſidence of the principal Courts " of Juſtice in Scotland, of the Boards of Cuſtoms " and Exciſe, &c. A conſiderable revenue, there- " fore, ſtill continues to be ſpent in it." And what is the conſequence? " In trade and induſtry it is " much inferior to Glaſgow; the inhabitants of " which are chiefly maintained by the employment " of capital. The inhabitants of a large village, it " has ſometimes been obſerved, after having made " conſiderable progreſs in manufactures, have be- " come idle and poor, in conſequence of a great " Lord's having taken up his reſidence in their " neighbourhood."

Such are the facts which this intelligent writer has collected; and the fair concluſion which he deduces from them is this, that " the proportion between " capital and revenue ſeems every where to regulate " the proportion between induſtry and idleneſs. " Wherever capital predominates, induſtry prevails:

" wherever

" wherever revenue, idleneſs. Therefore every in-
" creaſe of capital," (and diminution of the relative proportion of revenue,) " naturally tends to increaſe
" the real quantity of induſtry,—the value of the
" annual produce of the land and labour of the
" country,—the real wealth of all its inhabitants."*

Such is the reaſoning with which this acute writer has obviated the apprehenſions of our metropolis; and, by anticipation, recommended the preſent ſyſtem to its acceptance. A ſyſtem, which as well on principle, as from the example of Edinburgh, he (a Scotchman) infers would inſtead of injuring, advance the trade of Dublin; and one, under which its opulence being derived from the employment of capital, not the ſquanderings of revenue,—a fund would thus be raiſed for the reward of induſtry, inſtead of that which is now perverted to the encouragement of diſſipation.

Theſe arguments will weigh nothing with thoſe, who would rather receive payment for being idle, than for being laborious: with thoſe who contemplate with pleaſure the ſplendour of their native city erected on the baſis of its luxury and vice; and are at this moment perhaps employed in exciting its ſtarving manufacturers, againſt the ſyſtem which would feed them; and in favour of that under which they famiſh: with thoſe who accuſtomed to live on the ſcramble of faction, or by the arts of corrupt intrigue, are reluctant to part with the warehouſe, and implements of their calling; deſtitute as they are of talents, principles,

* Inquiry into the Nature and Cauſes of the Wealth of Nations, book 2, chapter 3.

principles, or habits, which might enable them to gain their livelihood by ſome better means: with thoſe in ſhort who can, without bluſhing, aſk permiſſion to fatten on the miſeries of their impoveriſhed country.

But there are men,—with whom ſuch reaſoning will have weight: who ſee nothing deſirable in a ſituation where the lower ranks of ſociety feed upon the vices of the higher orders, and are infected; and where, that the metropolis may not loſe the ſplendours of its parliament,—the peaſant, ſuffering the penalties of our general want of induſtry and capital, muſt pine away his life in a hovel ſcarcely human; or yielding to the inſtigation of ſome buſy traitor,—perhaps terminate it ignominiouſly, a prey to thoſe ſeductions, to which his wretchedneſs and ignorance had but too much expoſed him. Such men will eagerly embrace a change, which will build the grandeur of the city on the morals of its inhabitants; and even lay its broad and patriotic foundations in the general proſperity and virtue of the land.

The propoſed meaſure of legiſlative Union will promote the trade and manufactures of Ireland in two ways: it will beſtow upon us what we have not; and ſecure to us what we have. *Firſt*, it will remove the political impediments, which at preſent obſtruct our commercial progreſs; and "give us the "means of improving our great natural reſources. "It will communicate to us all the commercial ad- "vantages, which Great Britain poſſeſſes: will open "the markets of the one country to the other; and "by giving them both the common uſe of their ca-

"pital,

" pital, diffuſe a large portion of wealth into Ire-
" land." * *Secondly*, " it will both confirm, by irre-
" vocable compact, that profitable trade which we
" enjoy at preſent; and by identifying the intereſts
" of the united countries, will give us a ſecurity for
" its continuance, worth a thouſand contracts." †

That Union muſt produce the firſt of theſe effects, ſeems to me to be already ſufficiently proved; and upon that point I ſhall only add, (calling in authority to the aid of truth,) that Adam Smith long ſince pronounced, that Union would produce to Ireland the moſt important benefits, both civil and commercial; and that Dean Tucker conceived it to be ſo advantageous to our trade, that his object was to conquer Britiſh prejudice. He ſought to reconcile the narrow-minded of that nation to a meaſure, which, though it muſt materially ſerve this country, yet—as it would identify the intereſts of the two imperial ſtates, and ſtrengthen that empire which they compoſed, and whoſe ſecurity was their own,—ought not to be impeded by ſelfiſh conſiderations, and ſhould be the wiſh of every diſintereſted patriot in England. To theſe I ſhould beg to add the authority of my eſteemed friend Mr. Redford; the unſullied integrity of whoſe character would render his ſupport a valuable acquiſition; even though the work which he has publiſhed in favour of Union, were leſs replete with ſound, and perſuaſive reaſoning, and with pertinent and material facts, than to my underſtanding it ſeems to be. But above all, I would add the authority of a perſon, who on ſuch a ſubject is ſurely

* See Mr. Pitt's Speech. † Ibid.

ſurely entitled to be heard with peculiar attention; and who has publickly and expreſsly declared it to be his opinion, "that a Union would benefit both "the landed and commercial intereſts of Ireland."*

I ſhall therefore proceed at once to conſider briefly the ſecond operation to be expected from this meaſure, viz. the ſecuring that trade which we poſſeſs already.

In order to calculate the benefits of Union in this reſpect, we ſhould conſider, firſt, whether our preſent commercial intercourſe with Great Britain be ſo advantageous to this country, as to be worth preſerving; and ſecondly, whether its continuance depends on covenant, or is precarious: if the latter, we muſt deſire a meaſure which will ſecure it.

In eſtimating "the comparative utility of different "branches of national commerce," and aſſigning "to the ſeveral kinds, and diviſions of foreign trade, "their reſpective degrees of public importance," we ſhall find "the firſt place belong to the exchange "of wrought goods, for raw materials; becauſe this "traffic provides a market for the labour that has "already been expended; at the ſame time that it "ſupplies materials for new induſtry." †

Again, "the balance of trade is ſaid to be againſt, "or in favour of a country, as it tends to carry "money out, or to bring it in: that is, according "as

* See the Speech of the Right Hon. David Latouche, in the debate of January 15th, 1800, as printed in the Dublin Journal of January 31ſt.

† Paley's Moral and Political Philoſophy, book 6th. chap. 11th.

" as the price of the imports exceeds, or falls ſhort " of, the price of the exports."*

Let us examine the nature of our commercial intercourſe with England, by theſe principles; adopting the ſtatements of Mr. Foſter,—which it is to be preſumed no Anti-Unioniſt will diſpute.

In 1785 we exported to the amount of more than two millions and a half to Britain; while the amount of our imports did not exceed one million. In other words, a ſettlement of commercial accounts between the iſlands, at that period, left the balance of trade three-fifths in favour of Ireland; and in the interval between that time and the preſent, this balance has much encreaſed, and the Britiſh market become ſtill more valuable; England's conſumption of Iriſh produce now exceeding the amount of what ſhe ſends to us, in a greater proportion than it did in 1785.

But this is not all: not only the balance of trade is in our favour, but the nature and quality of the commercial intercourſe is beneficial to this country. It conſiſts in a great degree of the " exchange of wrought goods, for raw materials;" and of goods, withal, for which, " if Britain ſhould diſcourage their import," Mr. Foſter doubts whether " we could find a market elſewhere:" a doubt which is warranted by fact and experience; ſince of the entire of our grand and predominant export, (linen) ſeven-eighths go to Britain, and the Britiſh ſettlements.

Britain furniſhes us, ſays Mr. Foſter, " Salt, by " which

* Ibid.

" which we are enabled to prepare our proviſions " for the Navy: Hops, which we have not: Coals, " Tin, and Bark."

Thus, even if the balance of trade were not in our favour,—if our exports to Great Britain equalled the value of our imports from that Country,—yet ſtill the intercourſe would be advantageous to Ireland; inaſmuch as a traffic, thus conſiſting of the exchange of our manufactures for raw materials, would provide a market for the labour which we already had expended, at the ſame time that it ſupplied materials for new induſtry: and it would not alter the caſe, to aſcertain that in preparing the articles which we thus imported, ſome labour had been employed in England. Still the principle would not be affected: we ſhould ſtill be finding vent for Iriſh manufacture; and ſupplying ourſelves with the materials of freſh induſtry. " But theſe articles " conſtitute more than half of what is ſent us."* Therefore merely to calculate the amount of the commercial balance in our favour, is by no means to eſtimate juſtly the value of our trade with Britain. On the contrary, it admits of doubt, whether we ought not, in caſting up our imports, to deduct all articles of the nature of raw materials; and ſtrike the balance on a mere compariſon of the amount of exported and imported manufactures. Indeed, to controvert this principle, would be impliedly to inſiſt on the value of that kind of trade, which, in virtue of our want of Capital, we now poſſeſs; and which conſiſts for example, in the export of our

* Mr. Foſter.

Hides, and re-importation of them in the form of leather: a ſort of Commerce, which we do not need the authority of Mr. Paley for pronouncing to be of the moſt diſadvantageous deſcription; and which I admit is likely to be leſſened, indeed annihilated, by Union.

But above all, I do not fear that this doctrine of mine will be oppoſed by Mr. Foſter; who fully concedes my principle, when he repreſents our proviſions, (thoſe articles of prime neceſſity, which we have the kindneſs to ſend to England,) as mere raw materials, (for the manufacture of able-bodied ſeamen I preſume;) and thus adduces an argument, which he had refuted by anticipation, when (in 1785) he deſcribed the ſalt which we imported, as a ſort of raw material, neceſſary for the curing and manufacture of our proviſion.

Another circumſtance, urged by Mr. Foſter, ought not to be forgotten; viz. that we raiſe a revenue on what we import from Britain: thus making that country (as it ſtrikes me*) contribute to the expence of the Iriſh Government: for if it be ſaid that the duty is paid by the conſumer, I anſwer that as England imports more than ſhe exports, ſhe is ultimately that conſumer.

But theſe allowances may all be waved: and even (deluſively) ſtating the balance of trade between the countries, in the moſt unfavourable way to Ireland, we ſhall find this country a gainer by the intercourſe, to the amount of above two millions yearly.

Having

* This conſequence ſtrikes me on the ſudden. I ſhall not therefore anſwer for the truth of the principle; but it ſeems to me to be a ſound one.

Having thus ſhewn the value of our commercial intercourſe with Britain, (a value reſulting as well from the quality of what we import, as from the amount of our exports) it remains to enquire whether the advantages of this commerce be at preſent precarious; and would by Union be irrevocably ſecured.

The continuance of a ſyſtem, to which Great Britain is not bound by any ſpecific compact to adhere, it requires no argument to prove, muſt be precarious. Depending upon the mere pleaſure of that country, it may be abandoned on grounds of real, or miſtaken policy; and is even liable to be relinquiſhed, from irritation or caprice.

I have heard it aſſerted, I admit, that the linen trade of Ireland reſts on no ſuch inſecure foundation; but that on the contrary, its encouragement is the mere performance of an agreement. But this alledged covenant has eluded my ſtricteſt inveſtigation; and I muſt crave oyer of that contract, which you charge the Britiſh miniſter with having denied. *Litera ſcripta manet:* if the treaty has exiſtence, it may be found.

But the fact is, that it is a mere creature of the imagination: one of the phantoms conjured up by your party, againſt Union. This branch of Iriſh trade, in reality, depends upon the duties which Great Britain impoſes on foreign linens; and the bounties which ſhe grants on the export of thoſe, which have been manufactured in this country.

The truth of the above poſition cannot be diſputed; and is in fact confeſſed by Mr. Foſter and yourſelf, when,

when, evading the real queſtion, you diſcuſs what I take to be ſufficiently immaterial, namely, whether thoſe bounties were granted for the ſake of Ireland.

That the Britiſh Legiſlature may repeal proviſions which they have themſelves made, is a propoſition too ſelf-evident for proof; nor is the inference leſs manifeſt, viz. that the duration of our preſent commercial benefits, though it may be likely, yet is not ſecure.

That viſionary Compact on which Mr. Foſter relies, he will not aſſert to have been entered into ſince 1785. At that period therefore, our trade was not leſs ſecure than it is at the preſent day; and every argument which proved the expediency of concluding an advantageous commercial agreement, then, will *a fortiori* recommend the entering into a ſtill more beneficial treaty now. I therefore ſhall not preſume to add to Mr. Foſter's concluſive reaſoning, in favour of Union, (conſidered in a commercial point of view;) or attempt to ſhew "that an adjuſt-"ment, which for ever confirms all the advantages "we derive from our linen trade, and incapacitates "England from making any law that can be injuri-"ous to it," ſhould be eagerly embraced by all who regard that trade;* but ſhall merely obſerve that the Compact for which he argued ſo ſtrongly then, has not been entered into ſince; and (with additional advantages) is offered now.

I ſhall

* See Mr. Foſter's Speech on Mr. Orde's Commercial Bill.

I ſhall not take up my readers time, by dwelling on that paſſage in your Speech, in which it is ſaid that "the bounty on linen was not granted for the "ſake of Ireland,—and that Iriſh linen ſells itſelf;" but ſhall curſorily remark, that, if the intereſts of this Country were not what the Engliſh Parliament had in view, the policy was not very obvious, which by laying duties upon continental linens, incurred retaliating duties, impoſed in the foreign markets, on Engliſh woollen manufactures; and advanced the price, both of German and Iriſh linen, ſo conſiderably on the Britiſh conſumer, as to make England, on the whole, pay annually above a million.

I chuſe rather to advert to another conſideration, which this remark of yours ſuggeſts: namely, that it is inconſiſtent with the general tenor of your reaſoning, to underrate the value of an arrangement, which ſubſtitutes a ſolemn covenant, as the ſecurity of Iriſh trade, in the room of that liberality of the Britiſh Parliament, on which our commerce depends at preſent; and on which you do not ſeem diſpoſed implicitly to rely.

You, who refer our preſent ſecurity, not to the cordial ſentiments which ſhould unite two members of one common empire, but to a nice balancing of the powers of moleſtation, and retaliation, ſhould not, methinks, reject a plan, which by "incapaci-"tating England from making any law that can be "injurious to our linen trade,* will render Britiſh illi-"berality innoxious." Surely if we were to admit your doctrines in their full extent, we muſt for that very

* See Mr. Foſter's printed Speech in 1785.

very reaſon prefer a ſituation, which provided for our ſafety by diſarming Britain, to one which leaving it in her power to aim a blow, merely balanced this —by our ability to return it.

But that ſame competition of intereſt, which you moſt ſophiſtically rely on as a reaſon againſt Union, you forget to admit as an argument for compact; when in fact this rivalry (whether between individuals or nations) is the foundation and origin of all agreements whatſoever; theſe being mere expedients, reſorted to for obviating its effects.

The ſophiſtry of relying on ſuch diverſity of intereſts, conſiſts in your aſſuming, that when the countries had become united, their intereſts would continue contrariant and diſtinct. You pervert the jealouſies which exiſt at preſent, into arguments againſt confounding the diſtinctneſs from which they flow; and the datum which is required towards ſupporting your concluſions, is—that an effect may remain after its only cauſe has been removed; and that when all its parts ſhall have been intimately blended, the Britiſh empire will notwithſtanding be at variance with itſelf.

I ſhall not attempt to juſtify the treatment which, for a long time, this country experienced from Great Britain. Mr. Pitt has himſelf repreſented it as harſh; and the moſt unfair advantage is taken of an avowal, which at once did honour to his candour, and gave aſſurance to Ireland that a conduct thus reprobated will not be reſumed, when, by Union, thoſe circumſtances ſhall have been put an end to, which afforded the only ground or pretext for its adoption.

It

It is more ſtrange—than unuſual—that from the ſame premiſes, different perſons ſhould deduce almoſt oppoſite concluſions. Thus, that very illiberality on the part of England, which appears to ſupply you with an inference againſt Incorporation, furniſhes to my underſtanding an argument for the meaſure.

If indeed I were to agree with thoſe, who deſcribe ſuch treatment as the mere reſult of Great Britain's *inſtinctive enmity* to Ireland, I ſhould regard it as more than a reaſon againſt Union: I ſhould conſider it as an argument for ſeparation; and ſhould, on principle—try, by ſevering the connexion, to tear my country from the clutches of her malignant foe.

But I regard the controul, which we have endured, as the effect of a miſtaken policy,—more juſtifiable in its object than in its means:—a policy which had its origin and excuſe in that diſtinctneſs, to which England has at length the generoſity to put an end; and which every Iriſh patriot ſhould concur in deſiring to ſee irrevocably aboliſhed.

That the ſiſter country ſhould, with a ſort of gratuitous ill will, deſire to mar the proſperity of Ireland,—that Britain ſhould obſerve with uneaſineſs and reluctance, the welfare of a portion of the Britiſh empire, is an hypotheſis too abſurd and extravagant for belief. Inſtincts are given towards ſelf-preſervation; but this inſtinctive enmity would aim at ſelf-deſtruction.

But however warmly ſhe might wiſh to ſee Ireland proſperous, this ſentiment would ſtill be ſubordinate to another; I mean her deſire that the iſlands ſhould remain connected. Nor could this be deemed an illiberal

illiberal poſtponement; inaſmuch as "in the general "ſtrength of the empire," (which any looſening of the connexion muſt impair,) "*both* kingdoms are more "concerned, than in any particular intereſts which "may belong to either;"* and therefore the ſentiment which I have aſcribed to Britiſh policy, would not be unbecoming even Iriſh patriotiſm.

Independence, grafted, as ours has been, upon that diſtinctneſs which is in fact a *degree* of ſeparateneſs, is from its very nature and baſis, at variance with intimate, and therefore ſecure connexion; and is liable to be perverted into an inſtrument of ſeparation. I appeal to the experience of every loyal and candid Iriſhman, whether our independence has not been ſo abuſed? and I caution thoſe who are ſo fond of making 1782 emphatically the commencement of Iriſh greatneſs,—and who tracing our proſperity in no degree to the connexion, refer it all to the wonderful efficacy of a local Parliament,—to beware how they inadvertently ſupport the doctrines of Mr. Tone; who in an anti-union work of his, addreſſed to the people of Ireland, (and of which ſeveral copies were taken by Sir John Warren's ſquadron,) agrees with them in dating Iriſh advancement from 1782: agrees that Ireland has proſpered, in proportion as the line of her diſtinctneſs has been more ſtrongly marked; in other words, in proportion to her eſtrangement from Great Britain; and calls upon the people to complete the work which they have begun, and conſummate the proſperity of Ireland, by ſeparation.

Is

* See Mr. Pitt's Speech.

Is it matter for ſurpriſe, if ſo long as it might be doubtful whether "the power of Ireland was to "be that of England," * this latter ſhould watch the progreſs of ſuch power with diſtruſt? Is it extraordinary if ſo long as it remained uncertain whether this country was "to be part of the ſtrength of Britain, or an "acquiſition for the enemies" † of both,—attachment to the intereſts of the empire, nay of Ireland, ſhould produce a vigilant jealouſy of that advancement, which might ultimately involve theſe iſlands in one common ruin? and ſhall we not be eager to correct a ſyſtem, which unnaturally oppoſing our freedom and connexion to each other, gave England ground to fear that in promoting our proſperity, ſhe might be but enabling ſeparatiſts to wield with more effect, the weapon which our diſtinctneſs had put into their hands? Aboliſhing this perverſe order of things, which provoked a conduct "unworthy the liberality of Great Britain," ‡ ſhall we not gladly embrace that improved ſyſtem, which will enable us confidently from henceforth to pronounce, that "the "intereſts of the two countries *muſt* be taken toge-"ther; and that a man cannot ſpeak as a true Eng-"liſhman, unleſs he ſpeaks as a true Iriſhman; "nor ſpeak as a true Iriſhman, unleſs he ſpeaks as "a true Engliſhman?" §

Yes: congratulating Great Britain on that liberal change of principle, which induces her to conſult the integrity of the empire, not by checking our growing ſtrength, but by uniting it with her own, let us, without loſs of time become proſperous and

 ſecure,

* Mr. Pitt's Speech. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid.

ſecure, by exchanging a diſtinct for an incorporate independence.

I had proceeded nearly thus far,* when the Lord Lieutenant's meſſage being delivered to the Houſe of Commons, the terms of Union were diſcloſed by a Noble Lord, on whom my reſpect for him makes me rejoice to ſee the illuſtrious taſk devolve, of bidding his country become free and proſperous for ever.—The ſplendour of theſe terms ſuperſedes all inferior arguments for Union; and the man muſt be more phlegmatick than I deſire to be, who can liſten to them, and withhold his admiration.

By theſe, as if the Britiſh conſtitution were not of itſelf a boon worthy our acceptance, advantages are ſecured in commerce and finance, equalling the fondeſt hopes we could have formed, and almoſt exceeding the powers of calculation. Upon a principle, the fairneſs of which is beyond diſpute, the contribution of Ireland will be proportioned to its ability, and that ability be meaſured by an accurate criterion; nor will any power be given to the Imperial Parliament of altering or reviſing this principle, in any reſpect; but merely of enſuring its future application, and making the ability of Ireland the eternal and invariable ſtandard of her contribution. A diſcretion, which muſt be felt neceſſary to be given to the common legiſlature, by all who concur in the opinion which I entertain, that the inevitable conſequences of Union will be to encreaſe the relative ability of proſpering Ireland.

Nor

* One hundred and four pages of this Letter were already printed, on the day on which the meſſage was delivered.

Nor will this principle be leſs favourable to our country, in its effect, than it is obviouſly juſt and equitable in its nature; but, operating to leſſen conſiderably the preſent amount of our taxation, will give an auſpicious ſpecimen of the readineſs of England to make a great pecuniary ſacrifice, and ſcorning the deluſive and ſordid arguments of ſelfiſh policy, to regard the intereſts of Ireland as the aggrandizement of the Empire.

When you ridicule all pretenſion to liberality, on the part of Britain,*—I will point to the terms of Union as my anſwer: to the fair conditions of that generous Treaty, by which, without propoſing to entangle us in her difficulties, ſhe merely ſolicits us to participate in her greatneſs: retaining her debt, while ſhe imparts to us her proſperity; and exempting us *altogether* from the operation of that maxim, which preſcribes that thoſe who derive the benefit, ſhall bear the burthen. Sir, it ſuited the magnanimity of that glorious Country, the champion of invaded liberty and good order, to refute ſuch imputations, not by words, but by a conduct which Hiſtory will record, and Poſterity muſt admire. It became her ſituation, to acquire *peculiar* claims, in the caſe of Ireland, in addition to that title which ſhe had already, to general gratitude from the whole civilized, and by her protected world.

I have now gone through the moſt important topicks of your Speech; animadverting by the way, both

† "Liberality of England to Iriſh Commerce! She was liberal "never." &c. &c.———Mr. Grattan's Speech.

both upon them and your general politicks, with that freedom which we hold ourſelves privileged to uſe, in examining the conduct and opinions of a publick man; yet, I truſt, without having deviated from the reſpect, which on all occaſions one gentleman owes another,—and which, in your caſe, I ſhould be peculiarly ſorry to tranſgreſs: ſince, however ſtrongly I diſapprove of much of your political conduct, I will not be prevented by this ſentiment of blame, ſtill leſs by any feeling of party zeal, from recollecting what is due not only to your talents, but to the diſtinguiſhed ſhare which you had in the tranſaction of 1782, and the honorable part which you acted, about the commencement of the preſent War: and I take this opportunity of requeſting you, Sir, and my other Readers, to qualify with the above tribute—the ſtrength of any cenſure, which in the warmth of diſcuſſion I may have been, or ſtill may be, induced to apply to your language, or your meaſures: a tribute which certainly has ſincerity to recommend it; and of which the value will be beſt eſtimated by recollecting, that though I am appealing to you before the tribunal of public opinion, in order to weaken the force of your teſtimony againſt a ſalutary meaſure, yet I have ſcorned to reſort to thoſe charges againſt your character, which have not been ſo proved, as to bring conviction to my mind; but to which many in my circumſtances would have more than alluded.

I ſtate myſelf to have inveſtigated all your material topics; for as to that inconſiſtency, which you impliedly charge on government, by contraſting

ing their oppoſition to a modus, when formerly propoſed by you, with their ſuppoſed intention of connecting one with the preſent Union,—the imputation is diſproved by ſimply obſerving, that the ſame meaſure which under one order of things would be ſubverſive, might under another and diſſimilar one, be deſirable and ſafe.

Your remarks upon the clergy are no leſs anſwerable, and inconcluſive. Is it diſgraceful to Roman Catholic Eccleſiaſticks, that they countenance a meaſure, which, while it infuſes an aſſuaging portion of morality and intelligence, into the phyſical force of their at preſent fierce and brutal flock, (a character which I aſcribe to them not as Catholicks, but as rabble,) at the ſame time, by providing for the prieſthood, links the intereſts of that body to the conſtitution; and is calculated to increaſe the knowledge, influence, and reſpectability, of thoſe whoſe taſk it is to diffuſe religious inſtruction amongſt the people? Again, is "the perpetual "ſecurity of our eſtabliſhed church"*—a bribe, which the Proteſtant clergy can be diſhonoured by accepting? No, Sir: that ſacred body ſtands far beyond the reach of ſcurrilous reproach; and in ſupporting Union, they purſue a conduct which can not only be juſtified, but ſhould be praiſed; a conduct which ſuits the mild and peaceable doctrines of that religion which they preach. It well becomes their holy function, to countenance a change which ſhall ſtop the effuſion of civil blood: which ſhall ſoften thoſe malignant paſſions that have ſo long raged

* Mr. Grattan's words.

raged amongſt us, and almoſt ſwept away the virtue of the land: which ſhall ſubſtitute induſtry, in place of that idleneſs which is the nurſe of vice: which ſhall lead the inhabitants of this torn country to fulfil the duties of a chriſtian people, by loving one another,—and paying obedience to the conſtituted authorities of the ſtate: which ſhall found the ſecurity of the Proteſtant Church upon a baſis, compatible with the indulgence of that cordial truſt and confidence, which ought to prevail amongſt all the miniſters of one goſpel,—amongſt all the branches of one common faith: in ſhort, a meaſure, which whilſt it tends to fortify an empire, now waging the holy war of religion againſt impiety,—accompliſhes this deſirable, and glorious object, not by ſacrificing an atom of the liberties of Ireland, but by acquiring for her the full privileges of the Britiſh conſtitution.

Sir, I have heard much of the diſtinguiſhed loyalty of thoſe, by whom the meaſure of Union is oppoſed; and I admit that loyal characters are to be found in the anti-union ranks; who by inſiſting ſo much on their paſt attachment to the conſtitution, indirectly confeſs that their affection for their Sovereign, and the empire, is more evinced by their former, than their preſent conduct.

But there is a deſcription of perſons, (I do not ſay in Parliament,) whoſe loyalty is of a baſe and ſpurious kind; and of whoſe co-operation you have no reaſon to be proud. Men who, not actuated by any generous ſentiment, have hitherto followed the trade of allegiance, merely becauſe they found it a more profitable one than that of ſedition. Men who, profligately

profligately conſiſtent, are led to oppoſe the preſent government, by the ſame motive which induced them to ſupport all paſt;—by corrupt ſelfiſhneſs,—not public ſpirit.

Such, whilſt they make an uproar about their loyalty, in fact reſiſt Union for no other reaſon, but that though it may advance the commerce of their country, they are well aware it muſt extinguiſh theirs. Britiſh connexion they conſider as a ſort of ſtate commodity, for which England ought to deal, on their own terms, with them. They promiſe to ſupply this article of prime neceſſity, ſo long as they are permitted to vend it to the ſiſter country, and to monopolize the emoluments of the ſale: and though of late the crops have been but ſorry,—yet aided by the ſtrong hand of coercion, and continuing to manure with Iriſh blood, they make no doubt of having permanent and abundant harveſts; and think it hard that their excluſive traffick ſhould be ſpoiled, by Britain's beginning to purchaſe from the whole Iriſh nation, and while ſhe employs the people indiſcriminately to cultivate the connexion, by paying their labours with the Britiſh conſtitution.

Such reaſoning may be forcible, but it is not patriotick; and I ſhall not waſte my time by addreſſing thoſe who uſe it; but muſt apply myſelf to another, and very different claſs, whoſe principled loyalty I both acknowledge and admire,—and whom therefore, I grieve to find inadvertently in array—againſt the proſperity of their haraſſed country.

I will aſk them, and with the queſtion, (almoſt) conclude this tedious Letter, What are their expectations

tations in oppoſing Union? Do they hope to ſee that order of things revived, which ſome have deſcribed as a colonial ſyſtem? Can they hope that the ſtrength of Government will cooperate to reſtore a ſyſtem, the defects of which they have been neceſſitated to diſcloſe, and for which they ſee no effectual remedy, but Incorporation? Will Adminiſtration, to accommodate theſe gentlemen, recur to the plan of extorting by coercion, a precarious allegiance from a poor, ignorant, diſcontented, and miſguided multitude,—inſtead of watching *perſeveringly*, for the moment to make a change, which ſhall render loyalty the unforced, and ready offering of a proſperous, an inſtructed, and contented people? Is it to be expected, that for the mere gratification of a loyal party, a Government which rightly eſtimates the affections of the ſubject, and feels them to be the beſt ſecurity of the throne, will for ever abandon a meaſure ſo deliberately propoſed, and ſo explicitly declared to be in their opinion indiſpenſible? a meaſure too, which has been ſolemnly called for by the common Sovereign, and approved of in one of the Parliaments of the Empire? Is it to be imagined, I ſay, that adminiſtration will relinquiſh ſuch a meaſure,—and permanently ſubſtitute a ſyſtem in its room, where, in order to guard the conſtitution from attack, we are obliged to ſtrip it of every principle which ſecures the liberty, and excites the zealous loyalty of the people? Can we ſuppoſe that the Britiſh government will lay aſide all thoughts of Union, and cordially readopt a Regime, which fomenting civil diſcord and diſaffection, and rendering Ireland the

theatre

theatre of factious cabal, or ſtern and ſullen deſpotiſm, muſt keep the empire vulnerable in a vital point,—and tempting the vigilant enemy to our ſhores, make this Country, inſtead of being a reſervoir of Imperial force, an embarraſſing drain to the reſources, and a defalcation of the ſtrength of Britain? No: ſuch hopes it would be idle to entertain. Government, if fruſtrated for the preſent in its honeſt plan, would not enter into the views of thoſe to whom I allude, but merely wait a more favourable moment, for accompliſhing the proſperity of the Iriſh nation. This loyal claſs muſt therefore be content, in the alternative, either to further thoſe intentions of Government, which I have deſcribed; or (ſince alone their party would be too ſmall to make any head,) if they would reſiſt, muſt form a junction with that party, to which they are now moſt unnaturally allied,—and cordially promote the wiſhes of a faction, whoſe deſperate projects they look upon with dread; and whoſe political opinions they habitually abhor.

I conjure them to weigh all this maturely, before they perſiſt in their oppoſition to a meaſure, ſo emphatically neceſſary at the preſent moment, to fruſtrate thoſe attempts at ſeparation, in reſiſting which I know they would be ready to ſhed their blood.

Let them diſcountenance that moſt unconſtitutional and deſperate experiment, of conſulting, on a great political ſubject,—not the property, intelligence, or loyalty of the country,—but that giddy, wretched, and uninformed multitude, which, if it have any original and genuine ſentiment at all, is averſe from uniting with Great Britain—only becauſe it would rather incor-

porate with France. Rejecting the authority of a clamorous and diſaffected mob,—a *nata in vanos tumultus gens*,—which, compoſed chiefly perhaps of traitors, pardoned,—and unreclaimed,—is at once the dupe, and echo, of a few factious leaders, (whoſe opinion it would be the ſhorter, and ſafer way—to aſk *directly*,) let them prudently decline reſorting to the aſſiſtance of that barbarous and lawleſs power, which having firſt aided in reſiſting a meaſure which they diſlike, would end by overwhelming both them, and the Conſtitution.

Let them examine with generous ſhame, in the mirror which hiſtory holds up for their inſtruction, the diſgraceful nature of that conduct, which ſome enemies to their honour would prevail with them to imitate.

They will find that, in Scotland, "the party who "oppoſed Union, finding the majority in Parliament "againſt them, ſtudied to raiſe a ſtorm without "doors, to terrify them. *A ſet of addreſſes againſt* "*the Union were ſent round all the counties, in which* "*thoſe who oppoſed it had any intereſt.** There came "up many of theſe, in the name of counties, and "boroughs, and at laſt from pariſhes. This made "ſome noiſe abroad; but was very little conſidered "there, (in Parliament,) *when it was known by whoſe* "*arts and practices they were procured.*" † They will

* A reſemblance (ſay the metaphyſicians) may ſometimes be ſo cloſe as to be rendered ludicrous by its exactneſs.

† The Hiſtorian adds that "when this appeared to have little effect, pains were taken to animate the rabble to violent attempts, both at Edinburgh and Glaſgow." See the Iriſh Letters miſſive, paſſim.

will find, I ſay, that near a century ago, expiring faction had recourſe to ſuch expedients; and will ſcorn to follow ſo vile and miſchievous an example.

Thus much, at leaſt, I expect with confidence from their loyalty. I only wonder they will not let me hope for more. I only lament that they will not co-operate with the government, to reconcile a connexion which they value, with a conſtitution which they love; and obtain theſe combined bleſſings for their country, by a Union. I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your obedient and

very humble ſervant,

WILLIAM SMITH.

DUBLIN,
Feb. 10, 1800.

POSTSCRIPT.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE foregoing Letter has, conſidering its length, been written with ſuch expedition, that I flatter myſelf it will be thought entitled to ſome indulgence. An unwillingneſs to fatigue the reader, by the repetition of what had been already treated, ably by others, and diffuſely by myſelf, induced me to omit many topicks, highly material, and pertinent to my enquiry. For example, however relevant the caſe of Scotland might be to the preſent queſtion, I had little to add upon that ſubject, to what I had already given the Publick, in my printed Speech of the laſt ſeſſion; and could add nothing to what has ſince been urged by Mr. Redford, from p. 81 to 93 of his pamphlet. Mr. William Johnſon, too, by his ſound and conſtitutional work, had very much narrowed the circle of my inveſtigation; and laſtly, I was interrupted, and (fortunately perhaps for my reader,) hurried to an abrupt concluſion, by that lucid, and forcible ſtatement of Lord Caſtlereagh, which was more convincing than a thouſand arguments; and by the admirable ſpeech, which I heard delivered by Doctor Duigenan, on the ſame occaſion.

I do not feel it neceſſary to offer an excuſe for ſubmitting my thoughts on paper, (ſince at all) to the Publick. The topicks of Mr. Grattan's ſpeech demanded a more full and accurate diſcuſſion, than it could have been permitted to receive, when he cloſed it,—at nine or ten o'clock in the morning; the Houſe quite exhauſted, and calling for the queſtion.

A few

POSTSCRIPT.

A few words more, and I have done.——

A Report has, I cannot conjecture how, ſtolen into general circulation, that in my Speech on Thurſday morning laſt, I declared it to be my opinion, that if the Union could not otherwiſe ſucceed, it ſhould be carried by military interference, and at the point of the bayonet.

I ſhall not demean myſelf ſo far as to diſclaim ſentiments, or expreſſions, alike foreign to my character, and unſuitable to the uniform tenor of my public conduct; nor will I diſparage a meaſure patronized by the ſenſe and property of Ireland, by inſinuating that towards promoting its ſucceſs, recourſe ſhould be had to military interpoſition; but I ſhall plainly ſay that though many who may have circulated this rumour, are no otherwiſe to blame, than for having incautiouſly propagated a ſlander upon hearſay,—yet, (as I ſaid nothing which, I think, could furniſh a pretext for miſconſtruction,) it would perhaps be a ſtretch of candour to ſuppoſe that any man could, upon his own authority, charge me with having expreſſed the unconſtitutional ſentiment above mentioned, without being guilty of a ſcandalous, and intentional falſehood. A reſpect for Parliament, and regard for Truth and Decorum—make it right that I ſhould add my firm perſuaſion, that no ſuch perſon will be found amongſt the Members of the Legiſlature.

FINIS.